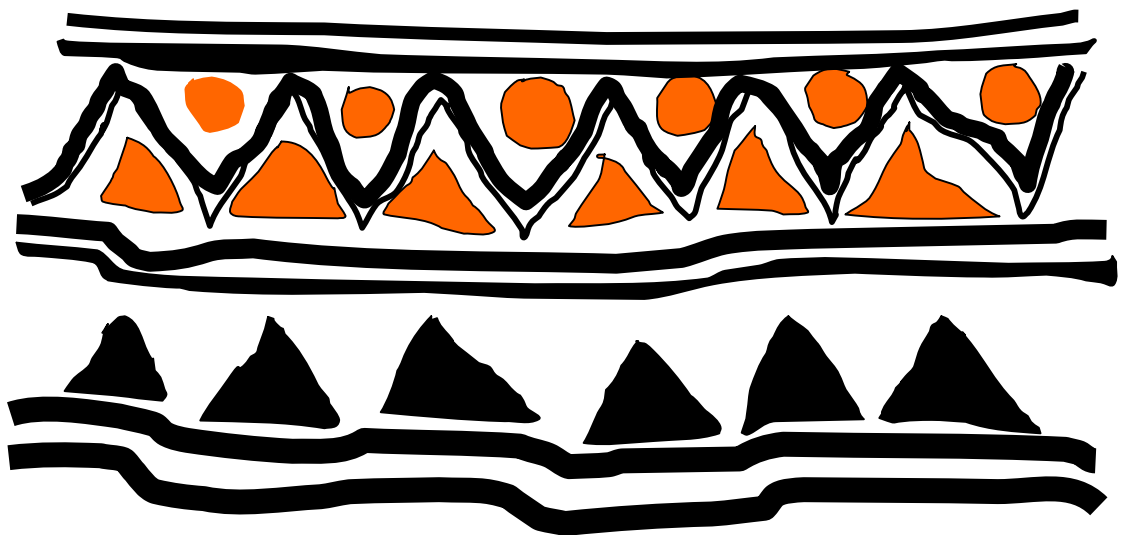


"A Cobra is in our Granary"

Culture-Drama and Peacebuilding

A Culture-drama Workbook



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Photo 1. Team Members with Participants

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Jon P. Kirby SVD

TICCS

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2002

Table of Contents

Title Page

Publishing Details

Acknowledgements

Photo 1. Team members with Participants

PART I: CULTURE-DRAMA AND PEACEBUILDING

INTRODUCTION

Groups with Chiefs versus Groups without Chiefs

Progress in Peacebuilding

Conflictive Cultural Pathways

CRS Sponsored Research on Conflictive Pathways

Introducing the Workbook

Culture and the Peacebuilding Process

Lederach's Four Stages in Peacebuilding

The Fourth Stage Vision of a "Peace System"

Cultural Research and the Third Stage

Why Peacebuilding gets stuck at the Second Stage

The Institutional Bias

Crisis-driven Funding

The Cultural Bias

The Need for a Third Stage "Integration Vehicle"

CULTURE-DRAMA

Culture-drama as a Vehicle for Peacebuilding at the Systemic Level

Culture-drama and Peacebuilding

How does Culture-drama Work?

What Kinds of Roles are Enacted?

How is Culture-drama related to Psychodrama?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF CULTURE-DRAMA

Environment Issues

Gender and Development Issues

HIV/AIDS

Fostering Inculturation in the Catholic Church

APPLICATIONS TO ETHNIC CONFLICT

Transforming Ethnic Conflict
Research and Cultural Analysis are Necessary
Shared Cultural Contexts
Negative Synergy
Cultural Scenes
Cultural Themes
How Culture-drama is used in the Workshop Format

PART II: CULTURAL THEMES

ETHNIC CONFLICT AND CULTURAL THEMES

The Case of the 'Northern Conflict'
A Pervasive and Enduring Problem

RESEARCH INTO CONFLICTING CULTURAL PATHWAYS

The Research
The Methods and Procedures
The Four Cultural Themes
Some Provisos

HIT-PEOPLE versus RUN-PEOPLE

Patterns of Aggression and Submission
The Kicking-leg Proverb
Dagomba Interpretation
Konkomba Interpretation
Figure 1. Graph Comparing Dagomba and Konkomba Responses to 'Hit-man'
versus 'Run-man' theme
Overall Results
Toward an Explanation
Why Dagombas 'Hit'
Why Konkombas 'Run'
Disparity between Ideals and Behaviour
Why Konkombas say they 'Don't know how to live in Towns'
Blind Spots and Cross-Cultural Miscommunication
Why Konkombas are 'Over-sensitive'
Egalitarianism and New reasons for Avoidance
Long-term versus Short-term Self-preservation
Envisioning a Common Path

'BIG MEN' versus 'SMALL MEN'

'Big men' = Chiefly, 'Small men' = Non-chiefly
A Plethora of Chiefs
Achieved Status
Photo 2. The Mionlana, a Dagomba paramount chief, at the workshop

Ascribed Status

Ascribed Status and the New Elites

Power Struggle in Dagbon

New Elites and "Development Contractors"

Conflictual Language

Photo 3. Konkomba workshop participant dressed in a Dagomba chief's ceremonial smock, the symbol of his office.

Dancing Pathways

Photo 4. Dagomba man relaxing in his compound

A Tribe within a Tribe

Lack of Ethnic Identity

Photo 5. Konkomba man relaxing in his compound

Literacy and Ethnic Identity

Educated Elites versus Non-literates

Now Non-Chiefly Peoples want their own Chiefs

Land Tenure and Paramount Chiefs

LAND-PEOPLE versus EARTH-PEOPLE

The Material Economy versus the Spiritual Economy

"The Land is for us!"

Master of the Land and Master of the People

Land as "People of the Land"

Land as Property

The Need for Legal Title

Photo 6. Market scene in Tamale

Money versus Relationships

Photo 7. Buying and selling enactment: a conflictual context

Curators of the Earth

A Sacred Ecology

A Moral Issue

Entrepreneurs and Individualists on the Rise

New Models for Land and Chieftaincy

An Interactive Confluence of Cultural Pathways

GOD-PEOPLE versus EARTH-PEOPLE

Conflicting Theological Pathways

God-people and Religions of the Book

Earth-people and the Religions of Nature

Tribal god versus Universal God

God and Chieftaincy

"God-people" and Islam

Photo 8. Author talks with Muslim participants

Islam in Dagbon
Christianity in Dagbon
African Religiosity versus Secularism
Religious Conversion
The Sky and the Earth in a -Peace Cultureø
Times are Changing in Dagbon
Times are Changing in Konkombaland
New Alliances for Peace
Mutual Assistance in Religious Matters

LIBERATION AND NEGATIVE SYNERGIES

Cultural Themes and Liberation
Resolving Cultural Themes

PART III: THE WORKSHOP

THE CULTURE-DRAMA WORKSHOP

The Workshop Format
The Aims of the Culture-drama Workshop

THE HISTORY OF CULTURE-DRAMA

Where did the Idea of Culture-drama Originate?
The Birth of a New Form
Photo 9. Author and Dr. Gong with notes during an enactment
Brief Development of the Form
Photo 10. Dr. Gong, Shu on break with participants
The Project is Shelved
Photo 11. Facilitator Renee diagramming an analysis

THE NSAWAM WORKSHOP

Background to the Nsawam Workshop
Why Choose the Dagomba-Konkomba Conflictual Pathways?

WORKSHOP TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Borrowings from Psychodrama and Socio-drama
Sociometric Mapping
Desert Island Drawings
Photo 12. Drawing on the -desert islandø

THE POWER OF ROLE-ENACTMENT

Role-Enactment as a Holistic Experience
Role-Enactment as an Ontological Experience
Photo 13. Drawings at the end of the workshop
Role-Enactment means becoming an -Insiderø
Differences between Enactments and Reverse Enactments

THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURE-DRAMA

- The Dynamics of Role-Enactments
- Cross-Cultural Conversion
- Exposing Stereotypes
- The Role of the Double
- The -Conversionø is in the Action
- A Co-creative Process
- Photo 14. Buying grain in a market scene
- Mutual Affirmation and Empowerment
- Photo 15. Chiefø's court scene
- Mutual Understanding of and Appreciation for Conflictual Situations

THE CULTURE-DRAMA PROCESS

- The Five Stages of Cross-Cultural Synthesis

1. RECOGNITION

- Learning to Leave
- Leaving to Learn
- Awareness

2. ACCEPTANCE

- Overcoming Denial

3. COORDINATION

- Bringing Sub-identities Together
- How Coordination works in Psychosynthesis
- Recognizing and accepting the Sub-identities
- Testing the Sub-identities through -Focused Enactmentsø
- Focused Enactmentsø are for the Group, not the Individual
- Bridging the Identity Gaps

4. CULTURAL INTEGRATION

- Learning from Each Other
- Coordinating Sub-identities in the Hit-man versus Run-man Theme
- Coordinating Sub-identities in the Big-man versus Small-man Theme
- Coordinating Sub-identities in the Land-people versus Earth-people Theme
- Coordinating Sub-identities in the God-people versus Earth-people Theme

5. CROSS-CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

- Creating a -Peace Cultureø
- A Cyclic Progression
- The Holistic Nature of Enactments
- Moving from a Negative to a Positive Synergy through Enactments
- Photo 16. Konkombas and Dagombas discussing together
- Achieving the Synthesis
- A Change in Perception
- A Change in Attitudes
- A Change in Vision
- Forming New Unities
- How will the participants Advance the Peacebuilding Process?

PART IV: HOW TO RUN A WORKSHOP

REMOTE PREPARATION

Putting in place the Main Items
 The Research
 Photo 17. Team members discussing a scene with a participant
 The Facilitator Team
 Photo 18. Team members coordinating a scene
 Familiarity with the Research
 Team Coordination
 ðCultural Script-writingø
 Choosing the Participants
 Photo 19. Group photo of participants
 A Cross-Section of the People
 The ðMid-Levelö Criterion

PROXIMATE PREPARATION

Choosing the Site
 The Time Frame
 Participants must be Well Informed
 Photo 20. Participants discussing during break
 Setting Objectives
 Break Time
 Photo 21. Facilitator in analysis, half-moon shaped seating
 Props
 Types of Props
 Photo 22. Market scene: note the use of props to convey the feeling of a market
 Life Props
 Photo 23. Earth shrine custodians pouring a libation at a shrine. Note the shrine itself and the ðspiritø of the shrine covered with a bed sheet.
 Improvised Props

DOING CULTURE-DRAMA IN WORKSHOPS

The Nine Stages of the Culture-Drama Workshop
 Photo 24. Setting the desert island scene

1. SETTING THE CULTURAL SCENE

Photo 25. Dagomba spokesperson introducing the chieftaincy scene
 Scenes are Elicited from Participants
 Photo 26. Konkomba spokesperson introducing the re-integration scene
 How to Use the ðCultural Scriptø
 Discerning the Roles
 Photo 27. Earth priest scene
 How to use Doubling
 Photo 28. Pouring a libation to the Earth shrine

2. WARM-UP

De-Roling
 Exit-Learning

3. THE ENACTMENT

Entry-Learning

Use the Languages of the Participants

Photo 29. Actors involved in enactment using their own language

Impromptu Scene-Breaks

Photo 30. Participants discussing an enactment

4. REFLECTION

Photo 31. Facilitator with diagram during the analysis

5. ANALYSIS

Moving deeper into the Analysis

The Power of Complementarities

6. FOCUSED ENACTMENTS

Photo 32. Facilitator and participant in focused enactment

7. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FOCUSED ENACTMENTS

Photo 33. Facilitator with participants during a break

8. CULTURAL INTEGRATION

Photo 34. Final synthesis drawing on the bed-sheet

9. CROSS-CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

EVALUATION:

HOW THE WORKSHOP CHANGED THE PARTICIPANTS

1. Introducing the New Enactment Process
2. New Perceptions and Understandings
3. Recognizing and Accepting Cultural Differences
4. Recognizing Cross-Cultural Miscommunication
5. Coming Together on Cultural Issues
6. Overcoming the Fear of Failure in Negotiation
7. Recognizing the Blocks to Peacebuilding
8. More Culture-Drama Workshops
9. Where to Go from Here
10. Summary

PART V: HOW TO TRAIN FACILITATORS

WHAT IS NEEDED?

Professional Knowledge

Local Culture and Language Skills

CORE QUALITIES

CULTURE-DRAMA TRAINING

The Three Key Elements

Action, Reflection, Analysis

Techniques Borrowed from Psychodrama

Training for Psychodrama

Techniques Borrowed from Culture-Learning

The Process of Culture-Learning

Putting the Two Together

ORGANIZING TRAINING SESSIONS

A Suggested Training Program

PART I: CULTURE-DRAMA AND PEACEBUILDING

INTRODUCTION

Groups with Chiefs vs. Groups without Chiefs

A great many of the more recent conflicts in Africa have taken place between neighbouring ethnic groups of the Sudan belt that have been closely linked historically, geographically and culturally. Many of these neighbouring peoples share in common the fact that one of them is a state system, and the other is typically organised as an acephalous or segmentary system around clan or lineage heads, and other leaders, but not chiefs. In short, one group has chiefs and the other doesn't¹. During the colonial era, in both British and French Africa, the groups with chiefs typically ruled or administered their neighbours without chiefs according to the dictates of 'Indirect Rule' (see Eyre-Smith 1933; Ferguson and Wilks 1970; Goody 1954).

Although this system was convenient for the colonial administrators, it was quite damaging to the local peoples and their peaceful relations. Skalnik (1987) maintains that the seeds of opposition were sown by the imposition of a European idea of 'state'. He says it was the colonial and post-colonial state that set the two traditional systems in opposition to one another. He argues, further, that in the case of the Dagomba/Nanumba group in N. Ghana, they were never 'that kind of state because they didn't 'rule' their Konkomba 'subjects'. Nor were the Konkomba completely 'acephalous' for they had political heads and could, and still can, organise themselves for war.

Here in Ghana, the opposition was strengthened with the imposition of chiefs and the establishment of various controls and taxes. The colonial records are replete with complaints by junior officials and political officers, who frequently went to the field, that the system fostered the political and economic oppression of the non-chiefly groups. In his ethnographic work on the Konkomba of Northern Ghana, Tait (1961) cites many examples of this. These oppositions continued and were reinforced in the post-colonial period up until the first major conflicts began in 1981. After a series of small conflicts, the Konkomba petitioned the government for their own paramount chiefs in 1987. When this was rejected, they petitioned again in 1993. It was the rejection of this petition by the Northern House of Chiefs that was one of the main

¹ Conflicts also occur, of course, between two or more acephalous agriculturalists like the Konkomba and the BiMoba, and between pastoralists and agriculturalists, and such conflicts are 'a way of life' among certain groups of pastoralists in Eastern Africa. In each case the 'pathways' interact differently and the cultural themes are also different. This study focuses on the conflicting pathways between chiefly and non-chiefly groups.

underlying factors leading up to the 1994 'Northern Conflict'. After that all it took to spark the fighting was a quarrel over a guinea fowl².

For centuries, both groups had lived side by side in a complementary unity, periodic raiding notwithstanding. A symbiotic relationship existed between them. The Konkomba performed certain functions related to farming, hunting, war and Earth shrine rituals, while the Dagomba/Nanumba performed others related to chieftaincy, dispute settlement and tasks that needed the organisation of peoples at the inter-clan and inter-tribal levels.

Thinking of the two groups as interrelated rather than separate helps the peacebuilding task. In the first place it allows us to emphasize the points of unity rather than division. Secondly, it offers a broader traditional political base of integration to build upon. Instead of seeing chiefly peoples and non-chiefly peoples only as two political extremes we can begin to see both as part of a larger system, or as Skalnik (1987) suggests, 'one system with two or more poles.' We will come back to this theme later when we discuss the possibilities for synthesizing the simultaneously opposed and complementary cultural pathways.

Progress in Peacebuilding

Over the last decade, since the close of the 'Cold War' the increasing number of minor conflicts, 'acts of aggression' and small wars has been matched, with varying degrees of success and failure, by a proliferation of peace organisations, centres, institutions and coalitions, all with very different orientations, approaches, methods, aims and objectives. Peacebuilders have been learning as they go along. A major achievement was reached in the recognition that many of the well-meant efforts were doing more harm than good (Anderson 1996). Another level of advancement was reached in the recognition that development and peace are identical twins. Peacebuilding and development efforts must be coordinated. The most recent efforts are those aimed at systematising a holistic process of peace and human development. It is from this holistic viewpoint that we are approaching this study and its application.

Conflictive Cultural Pathways

Much of the discussion among local peacebuilders about the reasons for the upsurge in the number of conflicts in Africa over the last two decades has centred on scarce resources such as land, power, mineral wealth, governmental services, and the distribution of these resources and services. But, besides these reasons, or more accurately, underpinning them, in most cases there are deep-seated structural and cultural factors. Although scarce resources and their inequitable distribution do aggravate the situation, our research into the cultural factor has led us to hold that they are not so much the cause of the conflicts as they are the effects of the deeper conflictual relations that are sustained and reinforced by conflictive cultural pathways interacting in shared cultural contexts.

CRS Sponsored Research on Conflictive Pathways

We will maintain here that the mutual interaction of these pathways, as they are structured and sustained by chiefly groups on the one hand, and the non-chiefly

² To play down the gravity the war, the Ghanaian news media called it the 'Guinea Fowl War'.

groups on the other, produce the disharmonious relations that provoke many of the conflicts that we see across the Sudan belt today. This proposition is based on anthropological research³ conducted in Ghana by the author in 2001 (Kirby 2001).

Introducing the Workbook

This workbook is based on this research and on the workshop that followed from it. The workshop was held at Nsawam, Ghana from 10-16, February 2002. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time that the new form, "culture-drama" which is being presented here, was used for peacebuilding.

Culture and the Peacebuilding Process

The major theoretical approaches to peacebuilding do provide for the systemic and cultural dimensions in the peacebuilding process (see Assefa 1993), but the cultural dimensions have not yet been well integrated into the systemic⁴. The widely acclaimed authority on peace, J.P. Lederach, goes one step further than most. He outlines four stages in what he terms "conflict transformation" in his book *Building Peace* (1997). These are: (1) dealing with the immediate crisis, (2) re-establishing a working relationship between the conflicting parties, (4) dealing with the systemic issues underlying the conflict, and back to (3) finding a way to introduce the systemic issues so as to uphold, reinforce and build on the mutual relationships established in stage two. In stages four and three he includes the cultural issues. Although he does not integrate them into the systemic, he sets the stage in a way that this can easily be done. In our opinion, Lederach's "transformational" model offers the best available theoretical framework for integrating the cultural dimension, and it is this model that we will follow in this workbook.

Lederach's Four Stages in Peacebuilding

Lederach's first stage is occupied with such necessities as obtaining a cease-fire, "mopping up" the war-torn areas, establishing security, disarmament, seeing to the refugees, and relief aid, etc. This may last for one to two years. The second step is relationship building: getting the two groups to talk with each other, to interact and work with each other, to live together and begin life over again. This can occupy peacebuilders for twice as long as the first stage.

The Fourth Stage Vision of a "Peace System"

From here, Lederach has us jump to the fourth stage, the systemic stage, where the focus is on transforming the systems of injustice and oppression. It aims at unravelling the deep-seated structural incongruities and imbalances that are built into the system into the traditions, the cultures and their history of involvement. It aims at redressing the deeper issues of structural injustice and inequality. From an anthropological perspective, I would add that it seeks to change whole cultures and their pathways especially the unjust or imbalanced structures that the pathways

³ An unpublished report entitled "Indigenous Peacebuilding in Africa: Adding the Cultural Dimension" summarizing the research, was presented to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) at the end of the project in December 2001.

⁴ Two who have begun this process of integration from a theological perspective are David Augsburg (1992) and Robert Schreiter (1998). Schreiter looks at the cultural issues from a theology of reconciliation and Augsburg presents a wealth of practical ideas and anthropological insights related to patterns of mediation and reconciliation in and across different cultures. Both have been a great help in developing this project.

themselves create and sustain. Lederach's reason for anticipating the fourth stage is to arrive at a clear vision for the path that the peace process must follow, for this level is the hardest to achieve in peacebuilding. It requires coordinated and sustained efforts over a very long time, perhaps a generation or more. He warns that progress may be uneven; there may be regressions, and if the final goal is not kept before us, and if initiatives are not made to address the deeper systemic issues, relations will surely regress back to open conflict. Without sustained efforts, the people will continue to live in what he calls a *õwar systemö*. They will never arrive at the *õpeace systemö*.

Between the second and the fourth stage there exists a huge gap that needs to be bridged by an intermediate process. This is what Lederach calls *õthe subsystem levelö*. Here, with eyes clearly focused on the peace vision projected by the fourth stage, the in-depth work of peacebuilding begins.

Cultural Research and the Third Stage

The work of bridging the gap in the third stage begins with the key question:

What are the systems that continue to produce war and prevent peace, and how can they be transformed?

Before the conflict-prone ethnic groups can begin to make the changeover from participating in a *õwar systemö* to a *õpeace systemö*, the basic research must be done. Social, historical and anthropological investigations, and social and cultural analysis, must be brought to bear on the issues. All of this is done at the subsystem level. There is a danger, of course, that the historical and cultural research itself can hinder the relationships that have already been, oftentimes too hurriedly, established. So research into the systemic issues must be introduced in a way that clearly envisions the fourth stage *õpeace systemö* and fosters and builds on the progress that has already been made in relationships.

Why Peacebuilding gets stuck at the Second Stage

Theory is one thing, but practice is another. Most peacebuilding organisations and institutions have it as part of their charter to deal with the third stage or its equivalent, but somehow they get stuck at the second. Moving forward into the third stage is much more difficult than the first two stages because it requires the coordination of many activities including in-depth research, understanding and assimilation of the research, and somehow fostering an integration process^ö not just a residential *õintegrationö* of the conflicting parties, but a systemic and cultural one.

The Institutional Bias

At present, the various institutional frameworks and organisations for peacebuilding in Africa tend to focus on the first and second stages of peacebuilding. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that peacebuilding institutions are just beginning and have not geared up for the additional tasks required for the third and fourth stages. Moving into the third stage requires some institutional retooling and it means coordinating many different streams of peacebuilding activities. There are also a number of inherent biases that block the process. One bias is related to the basic tendency for institutions to reproduce themselves. Because at present the institutional pathways accent the first and second stages, the structures in place, in many ways,

tend to block the changeover to frameworks, methods and the coordinating activities that are needed to address the systemic and cultural issues.

Crisis-driven Funding

Related to the institutional bias, there is also a personnel and support issue. There are very few research specialists in this line. At a peacebuilding summit⁵ I attended at KdK in Soesterburg, The Netherlands, at the end of October 2001, out of more than 300 peacebuilders present, I was the only anthropologist. Peacebuilding professionals who rise to the leadership levels of their organisations and institutions tend to be very good at the first and second levels, especially at fostering relationships, but they may not be very good at analysing information and issues, and coordinating an integration at the subsystem and cultural levels. This points indirectly to what is perhaps an even deeper, subtler bias in the direction of global peace funding. The bias is for short-term goals and quick results. As any aid director can tell you, 'things only get moving in a crisis.' It is easier to get relief and crisis management aid each time there is a war than it is to get money to prevent the war in the first place.

The Cultural Bias

Another bias accents culture. Probing the cultural roots of the peace process is new to the peacebuilding scene. Peacebuilders are not usually familiar with cultural analysis, nor do they have a good understanding of what a cross-cultural perspective brings to the peacebuilding issues and objectives. Since 'General European' culture forms the basic 'operating system' as it were, unprofessional interpretations of the cultural data can be very biased. Indeed, there is the real danger that if information is improperly interpreted and used, it could threaten everything that has been built up at the relationship level. Some peacebuilders may, therefore, be reluctant to encourage research. But this does not solve the problem.

The Need for a Third Stage 'Integration Vehicle'

Because of these biases: the institutional bias, the fact that the present institutions strongly relate to the first two stages, the paucity of researchers in the peacebuilding arena, the fact that the cultural dimension and the benefits of cultural analysis are not well understood, the short-term and crisis management vision of granting bodies, and the 'General European' cultural systems bias, in most cases, the necessary research into the historical and cultural background of conflicts tends to get left out of peacemaking agendas. We need to address these issues and biases and 'unblock' movement into the third stage. But we also need an adequate 'integration vehicle' which will carry us through to the fourth stage or which will help us to bridge the third-stage gap. Part of the difficulty in moving forward is that we do not yet have such a vehicle.

CULTURE-DRAMA

Culture-drama as a Vehicle for Peacebuilding at the Subsystem Level

⁵ The conference, which took place from October 24th to 26th 2001, was organised by the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation (EPCPT) and Kontakt der Kontinente (KdK). It was entitled: 'Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice: Issues ó Building blocks ó Lessons Learned' with the support of *Cordaid* and *Pax Christi Netherlands*.

Culture-drama answers to this need. It is an ideal vehicle to move the peacebuilding process through the third stage, to introduce appropriate research into the mix in a way that envisions a 'peace culture'⁶ and fosters relationships. It is a potential workhorse for the third stage. It aims at transforming the social and cultural systems at their roots. It is the best answer that we have to the key question posed above.

Culture-drama and Peacebuilding

Culture-drama is a new, socially therapeutic enactment genre. Within a drama format, protagonists enact the stages or parts of a conflict in a series of 'cultural scenes'. When culture-drama is applied to peacebuilding, the focal point is on conflictual cultural pathways. The pathways can be narrowly or broadly focused. Broadly speaking they can be the pathways of two ethnic groups in conflict, or the pathways of sub-groups and 'sub-identities' within the same ethnic group or culture. More narrowly, culture-drama can focus on gender, environmental, or religious issues within the same ethnicity. Even more narrowly focused, culture-drama can concentrate on the religious pathways of different ethnic groups, for example the members of a Religious order who belong to different ethnic groups, or it can focus on different religious pathways in an overarching culture, such as pre-Vatican II pathways and post-Vatican II pathways in the Catholic Church. With regard to all of these, the objective is to transform cultural pathways through enactment. 'Transformation' envisions something altogether new. Here it is the formation of a new pathway of peace, or a 'peace culture'.

How does Culture-drama Work?

Culture-drama works by a process of mutual 'cultural conversion' of the participating cultures. In culture-drama, two or more culture groups enact various 'cultural scenes'. By interacting in these scenes the actors become aware of their own cultural blind spots and those of the opposing culture. Then, through further enactment followed by reflection and analysis, they are helped to work through these until they arrive at cultural integration. As the individual cultures become less neurotic and more 'integral' they can begin to interact more positively, and gradually they begin to create a synthesis or a 'peace culture'.

What Kinds of Roles are Enacted?

The roles can include not only individual persons, but also personified spiritual, moral and secular forces such as the ancestors, deities and other figures from the spirit world, the forces of nature, the 'Earth' and forces in the modern world such as governments, the World Bank, IMF, and even local development NGOs like Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Vision, Oxfam, and Action Aid. But beneath the individual roles, and linking them together, the two (or more) cultures themselves are the main *dramatis personae*. Culture-drama, can engage the actors in complex cross-cultural situations, which would in real life be taboo because of their sensitivity.

How is Culture-drama related to Psychodrama?

Culture-drama is a new discipline and a new enactment genre. Although indebted to psychodrama, it is unlike it in that it focuses on transforming cultural pathways rather than integrating the individual human personality (see J. L. Moreno 1953, 1970, 1975, 1985; J. L. Moreno, Blomkvist, and Rutzel 2000; J. L. Moreno, and Z. T. Moreno

⁶ Where Lederach envisions a 'peace system' culture-drama envisions a 'peace culture'.

1975). It is unlike socio-drama because it is cross-cultural and comparative. It works with two or more cultural pathways within the conflicted social nexus. Although indebted to social anthropology, especially for cultural analysis, it is an applied social science. Culture-drama is to cultural analysis as socio-drama is to social analysis.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF CULTURE-DRAMA

Besides the application to ethnic conflicts, which is the main theme of this workbook, there are many other practical applications of culture-drama, such as to environmental issues, gender and development issues, HIV/AIDS, and intra-ecclesial issues such as inculturation.

Environment Issues

Many African environmental issues such as bush burning are primarily cultural issues, not educational or economic issues. Bush burning is not about forestry or trees. When people make this association, they are confusing the cause with effect. Bush burning primarily relates to people's understanding of the bush. In Africa, people do not wax eloquent about a tree. The bush is the enemy (see Kirby 1999). From time immemorial the bush has been burnt as a defensive measure against the bush itself and all that it stands for: the threatening chaos, the dangerous wild, the fearful unknown, the monster, the leviathan. There were and still are, of course, many useful aspects about bush burning such as clearing the land for farming, getting rid of snakes, hunting, and producing fresh shoots of grass for grazing. This is not to discount them, but of late, the burning itself has become the fearful and dangerous thing threatening life and security. Circumstances change, and it takes time, experiential time, for cultures to make the adjustment. Culture-drama is experiential time speeded up and concentrated. It can help societies to develop new cultural pathways to reconcile the bush and domesticity.

Gender and Development Issues

Many of the gender issues in Africa today are, in a more basic sense, cultural issues. Issues surrounding women and development in Africa, for example, are largely cultural. On the surface they may look like issues of economic injustice and oppression. But beneath the surface they are all about roles and relationships in change. Neither men nor women exist in a vacuum. They share the same culture. If a culture is neurotic and bad for oppressed women, it is also bad for the oppressors and for everyone else in the culture, although for different reasons. Both men's roles and women's roles in African cultures need to be re-balanced, re-harmonized and transformed in view of momentous changes in our world today (see Kirby 1987). Culture-drama can foster this transformation process far better than many of the General European-biased forms of economic and political empowerment that are sometimes fostered by well-meaning NGOs.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a world pandemic but it threatens Africa more than anywhere else. Here it is being spread through heterosexual contact and people are getting AIDS in spite of the availability of condoms and their knowledge of how to avoid it. In Africa it is a cultural problem. The culture of sexuality and reproduction in Africa have yet to be seriously studied and engaged in to assist in the war against AIDS. Very little is

known about the culturally determined contexts for sexual intercourse, the times, places, events and conditions that surround the act and make it forbidden, permissible, expected, or required. Little is understood about sexual etiquette, vulnerability due to states of mind and sexual politics, such as the power of being 'called' or 'sent' in Ghana, and the spirituality or religiosity of sex given a theology of 'abundant life' (Magesa 1997). These need to be researched, the underlying themes need to be produced and the 'cultural scripts' written up. People need to be made aware of the power these implicit cultural codes have over their sexuality. They need to accept this power of culture and engage with these situations through enactment. They need to test and experiment with the possible alternatives allowable within the cultural frames.

Fostering Inculturation in the Church

'Inculturation' in the Catholic Church, and 'incarnational ministry' in Protestant Churches are both concerned with cultural issues. At the theoretical level, the post-Vatican II Church supports 'inculturation', but at the subsystem level, the culture of the Church prevents this (see Schreiter 1999). Today in Africa, the Church is undergoing a deep cultural transformation in which it is gradually being re-constructed on African religiosity and tradition. Here it comes into conflict with 'Church Culture' which is an aggregate of systems inherited from ancient Roman culture up to present-day 'General European' culture. By dramatizing the conflicting cultural pathways of 'Church Culture' vs. the religiosity of African cultures (see Magesa 1997), culture-drama can help integrate ecclesial systems and foster the transformation process that is needed to indigenise (see Kirby 2002).

APPLICATIONS TO ETHNIC CONFLICT

Transforming Ethnic Conflict

One of the most valuable applications of culture-drama is to foster deep reconciliation of ethnic conflicts. It is particularly useful in situations where there are conflicting cultural pathways between cultural groups or sub-groups.

With regards to ethnic conflict, culture-drama is at its best when it is used to bridge the gap between stages two and four in the peacebuilding process. Within a culture-drama workshop context, participants can begin to act out the deeper cultural and systemic levels of the conflict without getting bogged down in the more superficial issues, aggressive negotiation and maintaining defensive postures that plague peace talks at the relational level.

The key to its success is that it does not aim at the super sensitive issues of inequity, injustice or the conflicting claims to scarce resources directly but it rather pierces deep into the structural issues, lays them bare and actually begins to resolve the imbalances through enactment. Issues that no one could touch before are suddenly resolved in drama almost before anyone realises what has happened.

Research and Cultural Analysis are Necessary

Of course, good culture-drama rests on the solid foundations of good historical research and cultural analysis. The cultural and historical contexts must be well

documented beforehand so that the facilitators can ‘culturally script’⁷ the drama. Then when the conflicting pathways turn up in dramatic format they can be easily identified, and they can be accounted for in the reflections and analysis that follow the enactments. The basic research and cultural analysis must extend to both of the conflicted cultural pathways and decipher the conflicted cultural themes that are present. These themes are at the heart of the problem and present themselves in shared cultural contexts.

Shared Cultural Contexts

Shared cultural contexts are situational, communicative or transactional events in time and space in which one or more cultures interact. They include all the situations of life: the political, economic, familial, religious, work, sports, leisure, and communicational contexts. They have a place component such as the market, the post office, a chief’s court, city streets, a classroom, a church, a mosque, or an Earth shrine. They have communicational sensory components such as verbal, aural, tactile, optical, olfactory, kenesic, and artifactual. They take place in time, such as the morning, afternoon, evening, day, night, past, present or future. They are processual events, each having a beginning, a middle and an end, such as a political rally, a particular battle, a sacred ritual, a secular ritual, a name-giving or ‘outdooring’ celebration, an occasion for giving and receiving greetings, a meeting of friends, a market day, or a ‘communal labour’ session.

Negative Synergy

Within these contexts certain recurrent themes may arise with regard to the interactions and expectations of the two culture groups. These can exude or produce either a positive or a negative synergy. In a negative synergy, characteristic patterns of conflictive interaction emerge which are based on converging or diverging aspects of the two cultural pathways. These patterns or ‘cultural themes’ (Spradley 1980) control the ways in which the two cultures interact. The greater the differences in the themes, the greater will be the potential for negative synergy and conflict. These patterns need to be discerned from the body of research and studied by the facilitators beforehand.

Cultural Scenes

Cultural scenes are units of interaction between cultures in a shared cultural context. Shared cultural contexts are the raw data for producing cultural scenes. Scenes are derived from ethnographic investigation, personal encounters or narratives and they can be put into an enactment framework for culture-drama. A ‘good’ scene is one that is shared or that involves both groups. It must be one that everyone can identify with, and one that is pregnant with cultural themes. A good scene attracts further scenes, which interact with it and air the conflictive themes. It becomes a kind of hub around which the other scenes are connected.

Cultural Themes

Cultural themes are the recurrent patterns of the two interacting cultural pathways. They are not just individual cultural behaviour traits but, in a dynamic sense, are

⁷ By ‘cultural script’ I mean the notes and information by which the facilitators make the links between the cultural themes and certain basic cultural scenes, which can be expected to come up in a workshop context. It is not like the text of a play. See Part IV below for more on what I mean by ‘cultural scripts’ and ‘cultural scripting’.

communal. They are the shared processes, which take place in shared cultural contexts. They are a shared interactional mode in which both cultures are culturally pre-scripted to behave in certain ways. These can be either conflictive or harmonious. They are implicit to the cultures, and are embedded in every day life contexts. But they can be made explicit through research, especially cultural analysis, and then they can be experienced directly by the people themselves through culture-drama.

How Culture-drama is used in the Workshop Format

In a culture-drama workshop a number of scenes are enacted. The enactments let the participants work through negative synergies. In other words, cultural scenes provide the context for extracting and working through conflictual cultural themes by means of enactment.

Without the scenes, as in everyday life itself, the themes remain hidden and implicit. Knowing what some of these are in advance, therefore, is necessary for good facilitation. Some scenes, especially those pregnant with cultural themes, are better or more useful for culture-drama than others. Advance knowledge not only prepares the facilitators to be aware of them and recognise them when they arise, it also helps them elicit information from the group, produce cultural scripts, set the scenes, guide the participants, analyse the scenes, and come to an integration by the end of the day or a synthesis by the end of the workshop.

But it must be kept in mind that, even if they are culturally scripted in the broad sense of having a game plan beforehand, cultural scenes always need to be taken from real life, or elicited from the stories and narratives of the participants. It is the role of the facilitator to identify the cultural scenes, elicit them or select them out of a previous enactment or discussion, and present them as scenes for enactment.

PART II: CULTURAL THEMES

ETHNIC CONFLICT AND CULTURAL THEMES

The Case of the “Northern Conflict”

In 1994, Ghana experienced its most violent and destructive ethnic war ever. All of the Northern Region was swept by the violence, which left up to two hundred thousand homeless and tens of thousands wounded and emotionally scarred. It is difficult to get accurate statistics because so many died in the bush, but some estimate that up to 10,000⁸ died (van der Linde and Naylor 1994) while others report twice that number (Katanga 1994a). In any case, it was horrendous in every way and those who were on the scene, and were lucky enough to have escaped with their lives, pray

⁸ Van der Linde and Naylor (1994) quote this figure from the National Mobilization Program.

that they might never again witness such terrible destruction⁹. Perhaps it eluded the world press because it occurred at the same time that television screens were focused on the Rwanda holocaust. But the violence, destruction and human suffering of the 1994 Conflict have permanently marked the national psyche and have drastically changed power relations in Northern Ghana.¹⁰

A Pervasive and Enduring Problem

Today, eight years later, Northern Ghana still lies under the pall of this destruction, loss of life and suffering. This is not to say, however, that there has been no progress in building peace. Much effort and considerable progress has been made by NGOs, religious organisations, and peacebuilding teams, especially the NPI and WANEP¹¹. Six peace meetings were held in Kumasi ending in the *öKumasi Accordö peace agreement and the formation of NORYDA¹² to keep peace efforts going on the ground (see Assefa 2001). Yet in spite of the gains, those close to the situation on the ground all agree that the war is not yet over. The main issues of land and chieftaincy have still not been dealt with. Many say that it can happen again and, if it does, it will be with even greater violence and destruction. Peace efforts must press forward into the *third stageö Here the situation in Northern Ghana reflects a wider problem. The conflicting cultural pathways of peoples in other sites of sustained ethnic violence such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Northern Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Northern Uganda, Rwanda/Burundi, Northern Kenya and Somalia all need to be addressed before there is any real security and sustained peace in those areas.**

RESEARCH INTO CONFLICTING CULTURAL PATHWAYS

The Research

From the cultural perspective, the peacebuilding process is one in which the conflictive cultural themes are brought into harmony both within the groups themselves and between them. The need to achieve this deeper harmony at the third level of peacebuilding led me to conduct a twelve-month research project on the conflicting cultural pathways that exist between chiefly vs. non-chiefly peoples in West Africa. In particular, I focused on examples from Northern Ghana, and within that region the Dagomba-Konkomba case.

The Methods and Procedures

Since the conflicts between the chiefly and non-chiefly groups began more than twenty years ago, I have been interested in peacebuilding activities from a cultural perspective. I conducted hundreds of ethnographic interviews and kept extensive notes on the subject. Twelve years ago I stumbled on the idea of culture-drama as a means to generate peacebuilding and my interviews narrowed to eliciting information about conflicting pathways.

⁹ I include myself in this number. For more than a month I was under siege at TICCS in Tamale by gangs of rogues and ruffians who brandished the body parts of their victims while they looted and burned with impunity. The police and the armed forces were nowhere to be seen.

¹⁰ For more details from different perspectives see Assefa (2000), Katanga (1994b), and van der Linde and Naylor (1994).

¹¹ Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) and West African Network for Peace (WANEP)

¹² Northern Ghana Youth and Development Association (NORYDA) was called a *önew structuring of political life in the Northern Regionö (see Assefa 2001).*

In 2001, I was able to dedicate myself full-time to this research. Using participant-observation methods and interviews, I worked for six months on such unifying elements as 'non-chiefly' pathways among chiefly peoples and 'chiefly' pathways among non-chiefly peoples. I was interested in comparing the interacting roles and interdependencies of the 'Earth priest' (*tindana*) and chief, especially among the Dagomba, and the 'proto-chiefly' roles of the 'market heads' and their relationship to the 'Earth priests' among non-chiefly peoples, especially the Konkomba. I found that a broad range of organisational structures and institutions supporting the idea of chieftaincy exists among the non-chiefly peoples, such as the Konkomba, and a similar range of traditional institutions associated with segmentary lineage systems, which are normally identified with non-chiefly peoples, exists as an integral part of state systems, such as the Dagomba¹³.

Then, over the next six months, I interviewed national leaders, officials, politicians, members of the armed forces, tribal leaders, spokespersons, and villagers of both chiefly and non-chiefly Northern groups, in order to elicit their views on the points of unity and conflict and, in general, their views on issues surrounding the ethnic conflicts. Putting the results of these interviews together with the earlier data on the mixed chiefly and non-chiefly pathways led me to roughly formulate a number of ambiguous conflictual/unitary themes.

The 'chiefly' Dagomba and 'non-chiefly' Konkomba were then chosen for more focused observation and analysis. The ways these two groups relate ideally demonstrates the shared themes. They constantly interact; they share a common history of co-dependence, adjacent or overlapping geographical boundaries, and a wide range of cultural contexts and institutions. I pursued the themes and attempted to articulate them further by conducting informal and structured ethnographic interviews among opinion leaders, religious leaders, townspeople and villagers. I also conducted interviews with focus groups and various sub-groups. These interviews concentrated on such issues as: the meaning of peace and war, patterns of negotiation, 'fight' vs. 'flight', patience vs. hotheadedness, reconciliation and resolution, the spirit world and the material world, and the growing divide between 'sacral thinking' and 'secular thinking'. As the new information came in, I narrowed the focus of the interviews. Eventually four themes emerged. I selected one of the themes, 'hit-man' vs. 'run-man' or 'fight' vs. 'flight' for more intensive analysis. I then sought out the differences in values and behaviour between the two groups by comparing their interpretations of a number of proverbs about conflict themes.

The Four Cultural Themes

The unstructured interviews confirmed that a negative synergy exists between chiefly and non-chiefly groups, especially between the Dagomba and Konkomba. A number of recurrent conflictual cultural themes, quite predictably, arise to create this negative synergy.

The structured interviews confirmed at least four cultural themes, each having two extremes. One group was found to be more at one end of the scale, while the other group was more at the other end. Broadly speaking, these themes also seem to apply

¹³ I am in the process of preparing a series of articles showing these relationships.

to other peoples throughout Northern Ghana, and among chiefly and non-chiefly peoples across the Western Sudan.¹⁴ For easy reference I refer to these themes metaphorically as:

1. ðHit-peopleø vs. ðRun-peopleø (Aggression vs. Compliance, Avoidance)
2. ðBig-menø vs. ðSmall-menø (Chiefs vs. Family heads)
3. ðLand-peopleø vs. ðEarth-peopleø (Landlords vs. Earth Priests)
4. ðGod-peopleø vs. ðEarth-peopleø (Profane vs. Sacred)

Some Provisos

While these metaphors of the extreme positions on a scale of differences are catchy and economical, it should be stressed that we are not saying by this that one extreme is ðgoodø (and by inference, those that choose that extreme are ðgoodø) or that the other extreme is ðbadø (and similarly those that choose that extreme are ðbadø). It should also be stressed that both extremes apply to both groups, but not to the same degree. We are saying that, along the gradations ranging from one extreme to the other, the responses of one group, as a whole, are more toward one extreme and the responses of the other fall more toward the other extreme. In the following section I briefly describe these ðcultural themesø in terms of how the two cultures typically relate to each other.

HIT-PEOPLE vs. RUN-PEOPLE

Patterns of Aggression and Submission

The first theme involves patterns of aggression and submission. In earlier interviews and discussions I had gathered some prospective themes and I wished to test these. First I wished to determine how the two groups compared with each other on a scale from aggressive to submissive^ø whether or not one tended to be more aggressive and the other more submissive^ø which is what my unstructured interviews seemed to predict. I wished, of course, to identify the cultural themes, that is culture-based behavioural and attitudinal preferences in the culture as a whole, and not the characteristics of this or that individual.

A number of characteristics were associated with each extreme. At the ðhitø extreme were the ðprovocateursø and ðagitatorsø, while at the ðrunø extreme were those who, as a whole, tended to submit to provocation or tried to avoid it. The Dagomba tended to have highly developed strategies of provocation and the Konkomba highly developed strategies of avoidance. The former tended to live in close quarters, in towns and cities, while the latter typically lived in isolated hamlets consisting of a few dispersed compounds. The former tended to agitate, trying to achieve higher privilege and status, while the latter tried to avoid agitation and disruption. The former favoured ascribed privilege and status, while the latter tended to disregard or ignore it.

¹⁴ Through field research I was able to verify that the themes generally applied to the Gonja and Nawuri, the Gonja and Vagla, and with greater variation between Mamprusi and Kusasi, Mamprusi and Builsa, and Mamprusi and BiMoba. I was also able to find, in a quick review of the literature, some of these themes among other chiefly and non-chiefly groups in the Western Sudan. More research would be required to verify this.

The 'Kicking-leg' Proverb

In order to probe the *-hit-man* vs. *-run-man* theme, my assistants conducted interviews on the meanings of certain proverbs about conflict. The key proverb was interesting, first of all, because, although it was very similar in both Dagbani and Konkomba, it had a slightly different connotation and bias in each language. In Dagbani it was: *õWhen someone kicks your leg and you don't kick back, it means that you are not strong (or your leg is not strong)õ* (*Ni azo yi tab 'ga, ka abi tab 'go nyo, di wuhuri mi ni nyini choãmi*). All the Dagomba (and other members of local *-chiefly* groups whom I also asked, such as Gonja, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Anufo) were familiar with this proverb or a variation of it.

In contrast to the *-chiefly* peoples, some of the *-non-chiefly* peoples (Nawuri for example) did not have a proverb about *õthe kicking legõ*. The main group, the Konkomba, however, did. A few Konkomba simply confirmed the Dagomba version but most had a different version that went like this: *õWhen someone kicks you and you don't kick back, it means that your leg is shortõ* (*Uni ya liesi, aya ka lie uda kan nimo ke ata le afo*).

Dagomba Interpretation

Routinely, those interviewed¹⁵ were asked to interpret the proverb. Most of the Dagomba interpreted it to mean that if someone offends you, provokes you, or challenges your authority, your strength, your rights etc. in some way, you are obliged to retaliate in a similar fashion, and show your strength. If not, you lose face and admit to being *õweakõ*. This is the archetypal *-hit-man* perspective.¹⁶ Besides this dominant¹⁷ interpretation, two other lesser interpretations were also given. Some of the informants¹⁸ opted for *õpatienceõ*, saying that it was better not to retaliate but one should always wait and look more deeply into the matter. Sometimes what you first think is a provocation is actually a mistake or even a misdirected attempt to help. Some¹⁹ also said they *õdidn't agreeõ* with this proverb and that it was always better to *õshow kindnessõ* and never to respond with violence. This indicates a realisation that the proverb has a certain inherent bias in favour of the *-hit-man* extreme.

Konkomba Interpretation

The Konkomba also responded with these three basic interpretations. But, in contrast to the Dagomba, the majority of them offered interpretations that were clustered more

¹⁵ The structured interviews included 60 Dagomba and 60 Konkomba. The Dagomba interviewees included mostly adult men from Tamale and the villages around Tamale, between 30 and 60 years old, in three categories: literate clerical workers, non-literate farmers, and labourers. Roughly half were Muslim, which corresponded with the general Dagomba population. About 20% were Christian and 30% followed traditional religion. It was very difficult to interview women on this topic and we were only able to interview 7. The Konkomba interviews were held in the Saboba area. Interviewees were also aged 30-60. There were about 20 Christians and 40 traditionalists, half of whom were teachers, clerical workers and petty traders, and half non-literate farmers. There were only 4 women; all were literate. We attempted to interview other non-literate Konkomba women but their responses were inexact and we decided to drop them.

¹⁶ Of course there are submissive chiefly people and aggressive non-chiefly people, and at certain times and under certain circumstances all chiefly peoples can be submissive, and at other times and circumstances all non-chiefly peoples can be aggressive.

¹⁷ Most of this dominant group were younger (30-40) and uneducated.

¹⁸ These tended to be the most mixed and balanced group regarding age, gender, status, religion, and education.

¹⁹ Most of these were older but otherwise a mixture of variables.

at the *ʼrun-man* extreme. Some of them even changed the proverb's inherent bias by saying: *õ . . . it means your leg is not strong.õ* They²⁰ thought that it is good to *ʼback off* and they defended this by insisting that the kicked person who backs off is not necessarily a weak person. It is simply good sense to back off until the time is right or until the leg becomes strong. One should not retaliate unless pressurised or sure to win. Similar to the Dagomba, there were also some²¹ who held to a middle perspective. They insisted that *õpatienceõ* was necessary. One should neither *ʼhit* nor *ʼrun* but patiently wait until a course of action becomes clear. And, of course, there were some²² who said that they *õdid not agree with the proverbõ* and insisted that one must always retaliate to show one's strength and not weakness.

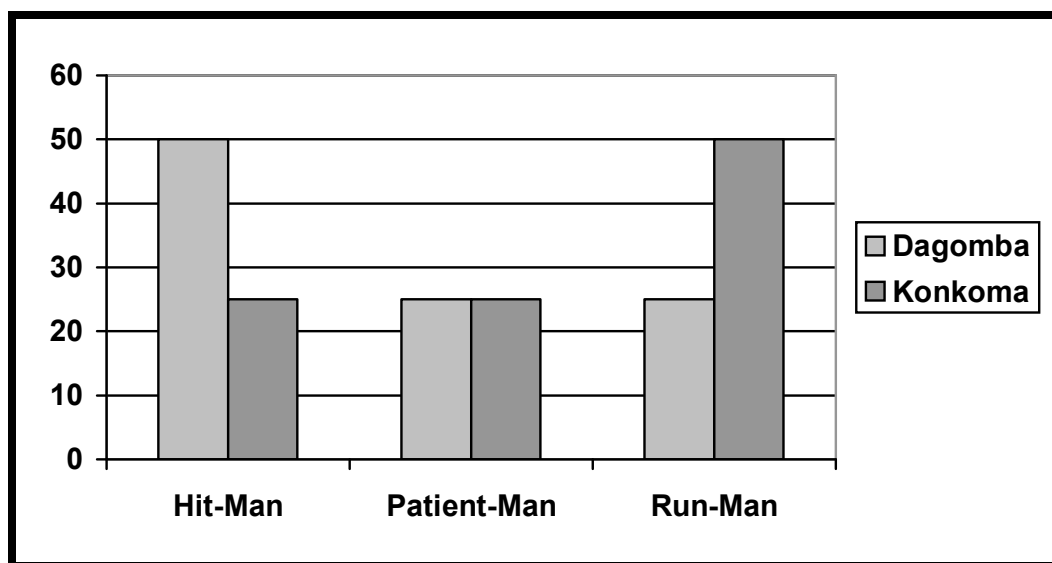


Figure 1.
Graph Comparing Dagomba and Konkomba Responses to
ʼHit-man vs. *ʼRun-man* theme

Overall Results²³

About half of the Dagomba opted for a *ʼhit-man* perspective; one-fourth for the middle perspective of *ʼpatient-man* and one-fourth opted for the *ʼrun-man* perspective. The Konkomba were more or less the opposite, with about half of them opting for *ʼrun-man*, one-fourth for *ʼpatient-man*, and one-fourth for *ʼhit-man*. It was clear that the sub-identities of the Konkomba clustered more to the *ʼrun-man* side and those of the Dagomba clustered more to the *ʼhit-man* extreme. Thus, as we shall see, both groups need the other group to help them integrate and the mid-range

²⁰ Most of these tended to be older.

²¹ These tended to be a balanced group. No significant variables.

²² Most of these tended to be young persons.

²³ Although none of the themes were really quantifiable, the *ʼhit-man* vs. *ʼrun-man* theme was slightly more so. Ethnographic research is not an exact science. Therefore, I present this quantification, not to show exact correlations, but because the graph offers us a clearly visible pattern of opposition and complementarity between the two groups. The complementarities are especially important for culture-drama.

or the *ɸpatient-manø* perspective, where the two groups are most balanced, offers the best cultural base upon which to build the new *ɸpeace cultureø*

Biased Proverbs

If the Dagomba are the *ɸhit-peopleø* and the Konkomba are the *ɸrun-peopleø*, the reasons for this can be found in the cultural dynamics of each group and the shared dynamics between the two. First of all, it is significant that the proverbs themselves are biased. The Dagomba proverb *ɸexpectsø a ɸhit-manø* interpretation and the Konkomba proverb *ɸexpectsø a ɸrun-manø* interpretation. In fact, when English was used, the Dagomba often added: *øWouldnøt that person kick back?ø* And the Konkomba added: *øWouldnøt that person wait and see?ø*

Why Dagomba ‘Hit’

It is well known from the literature (Staniland 1975) that Dagomba multiply aggressive strategies for achieving higher status, power and economic control. They, especially the Royals, are constantly *ɸagitatingø* among themselves, so they are relatively immune to the agitations of others. They express themselves forcefully and confidently because they know exactly when to *ɸhitø* and when to *ɸrunø* and because interactive conventions (e.g. *øFall and fall makes the dogø play sweetø*) and the presence of chiefs prevent the *ɸgive and takeø* process from getting out of hand. Although the Dagomba *ɸhitø* within the bounds of numerous socially structured constraints and norms, a certain amount of agitation beyond these constraints is not only possible, it even necessary to test the laws and provide strong leadership and charisma.

They also have many ways to handle conflict other than the crude and wasteful Konkomba *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth²⁴. Chiefs can intervene and cool matters down, and they can demand fines and compensation as the debt-payment.

Why the Konkomba ‘Run’

The Konkomba do not have chiefs and, up until very recently, they did not need to have them. Their interactions with other peoples, including other Konkomba outside their clan, have always been very limited. They are able to handle disputes between extended families and even clans without going to war, but because of their fragmented segmentary lineage systems, they are not able to handle them between major subgroups (some call them *øtribesø*) like the Komba and Chamba, let alone with other ethnic groups. Conflicts at this level in the past could only be resolved by war or avoidance (see the discussion in Naden 1984).

Up until now, mediation was neither necessary nor possible beyond the level of the clan or the basic social unit. This is because at this level its rights and freedoms are held in common and it cannot be indebted to itself. In any case, there were no chiefs

²⁴ I take the opportunity here to clarify what might appear to be a contradiction between *lex talionisø* and the *ɸrun-manø* stance of the Konkomba. *ɸRun-manø* does not necessarily mean peaceful and meek, for vengeance can be postponed, just as *ɸhit-manø* does not necessarily mean obsessively violent and impulsive for one may strike in a cool, calculated fashion. As will be shown, it relates more to the quest for freedom.

or spokespersons to handle such mediation²⁵ and few conventions²⁶ or procedures to follow. Each clan, with its elder as head, was and still is a free entity unto itself (Tait 1958), and their freedoms could not be infringed upon by another group without incurring a debt. Thus all the conventions governing their relationships come down to one basic rule of thumb—respecting each other's freedom. The Konkomba try to preserve freedom— their own and that of others.

Why the Konkomba Say They “Don’t Know How to Live in Towns”

When I asked Konkomba to tell me why the “Northern Conflict” occurred, many of them said: “It is because of our animals.” At first this response seems very general and stereotypical, but it points to a deeper reality. The Konkomba do not tie their animals but let them have their freedom to roam about. They say, “When you live too close to people and your animals eat their crops, it brings trouble.” For the Konkomba, it is unthinkable to tell another person what to do or to constrain him or her to your will. They relate in the same way to their domestic animals. They let them go free and unhindered. Thus the obligation to preserve freedom extends to all living things. To them it is a law of nature.

“Short Legs” is a Fact of Life

In the past, if there was a quarrel among the Konkomba or if one group attacked the other, their strict code of debt-payment demanded retribution in kind. Even now, if one of their group is killed, then one from the other group must also be killed to repay the debt. If women or cows are stolen, they must be replaced. No amount of mediation absolves the debt. It may take some time, but it will be paid, even if it has to wait until the next generation.

In this social setting debt-avoidance soon becomes a top priority. The elders are constantly on the lookout to avoid potential debts and infringements on the rights and freedoms of other clans, sub-tribes and tribes. They live isolated, far in the bush and they build their settlements just out of arrowshot from each other in order to avoid such infringements. They stick to their own business and are concerned only with their farming. They are constantly going to diviners in order to remember past debts or foresee and avoid new ones. Such debts might be incurred at any communal function such as funerals, festivals, or even going to market (Kirby 1986). This strategy of “preventative” running is like a shadow behind the scene directing their responses to everything, including the “kicking leg” proverb above.

²⁵ In my research I found that among non-chiefly groups in certain cases “market heads” took on some of the functions of chiefs. They settled market disputes, could exact fines or retribution payments which were used to buy sacrificial animals to intercede with the market shrine— which was derived in most cases from the Earth shrine. They could also call down the sanctions of the market/Earth shrine against those who break the taboos of the shrine. Taboos normally included theft, violent assault, and selling certain types of produce or animals, with which the shrine was associated, in the market. I concluded that the market “master” was a kind of proto-chief, and that if the colonial era had not intervened; they would have developed into chiefs. This idea was first proposed by Cardinal (1920).

²⁶ As with the “market heads”, I also found a number of proto-conventions regarding mediation in the so-called “joking” relations and in various types of “go-between” or “friends” who helped arrange marriages between clans among both non-chiefly and chiefly peoples. Among chiefly peoples they survive as a cultural anachronism that goes back to a time, before they were assimilated, when they had no chiefs.

But there is also 'defensive' running when their freedoms have been infringed upon. For Konkomba, 'defensive' running is pragmatic. Having 'short legs' has been a fact of life. Both groups recognise that one must be weaker and the other stronger. Life is full of inequalities, greater and lesser capabilities. Being weaker is disadvantageous but nothing to be ashamed of. History has assigned them the weaker role. For eons they have been too weak, too small, too unorganised, too ill equipped and too fragmented to take on any of the 'chiefly' groups. They have always discretely withdrawn. But now that role has changed. If the series of conflicts over the last 20 years has shown anything, it is that, when it comes to war, the Konkomba are no longer weak, fragmented and disorganised.

Although the 'kicking-leg' proverb was more about 'defensive' running, the responses were strongly influenced by the underlying strategy of 'preventative' running. For the Konkomba any kind of 'agitation' has a 'shameful tinge' because it constrains others' freedoms. For the Dagomba, being weaker is shameful, but for Konkomba hitting first is shameful. Acting the bully is shameful. It is because of this that Konkomba often appear to be submissive, dull or unresponsive. They are unable to distinguish between taking a pro-active stance on an issue and aggressive agitation, or standing up for their own rights and retaliation²⁷. This also becomes a problem because not to retaliate is shameful, unless it is 'defensive' running, and the fact is they no longer need to be defensive. So, they are trapped by their own pathways.

The World is Closing in on them

Avoidance was, and still is, the main Konkomba strategy for preventing conflict. But it is no longer effective. In the past it has served them well, but this is no longer the case. Yet, it is still built in to their cultural pathways. Social and environmental pressures are forcing them out of their isolation, but they do not yet have the social and cultural institutions to deal with intimate social contact. The world is closing in on them. Not only has the population increased²⁸, their former relationship with the land is under attack. The good farmlands are being depleted and they cannot press further into the 'bush' because there is almost no 'bush' left. Worst of all, they are denied entitlement or land ownership.

They are also internally conflicted because, now that they are strong, retreat has become shameful. They know that they are no longer weak but they cannot use their new strengths appropriately. There is great internal pressure to stand and fight. But they do not know how to 'fight' the most important battle of all, which is to change

²⁷ For this reason the government directive against aggressive agitation and retaliation in the Region also effectively prevents any kind of positive civil action or civil disobedience against unjust laws.

²⁸ Konkomba have been leaving their 'home' districts northeast of Yendi for the past 40 years in search of fertile farmlands. It is estimated that they are now more numerous than the original settlers in the vast tracts of land south of Yendi and Tamale down to Lake Volta. Since Konkomba live far in the bush it has been notoriously difficult to get accurate census readings. The preliminary results of the 2000 Census have just been released (see Benoni Okine, *Daily Graphic*: 29 Dec. 2001) but there are already protests (31 Dec. 2001) of over-counting some groups and undercounting others. The Census puts the Dagomba at 16.5% of the population, pushing them over the 3 million mark. This seems incredible considering that the entire Northern Region has only 1.8 million inhabitants and considering that they were only 217,000 in 1960 (Ghana Census 1964). Some observers close to the scene told me that most of those doing the counting were Dagomba and they counted large numbers of Konkomba in the bush as Dagomba. More realistically, they should be between 700,000 (see Barker 1986:129) and one million. According to one commentator (Katanga 1994a: 19), the Konkomba are now well over a million, half of whom are outside the Northern Region, mostly in Brong-Ahafo and Asante Regions.

their own pathways. They now say, “Our eyes have been opened.” They understand their political rights but they do not know how to exercise them. Each new political or economic retreat adds another resentful memory. The memories keep accumulating. And periodically there is a violent outburst of pent up feelings, which only worsens conflict potential. It is no wonder they say, “We are being pushed up against a wall.”

They epitomise their overall dilemma by saying that they “don’t know how to live in towns.” But they need to learn. They need to adjust their pathways to the changing world. They need to learn how to balance their need for freedom with the increasing constraints of the modern world. They must learn to live with others if they want to prevent future wars. And the Dagomba are the best people to help them.

Blind Spots and Cross-cultural Miscommunication

In a cultural theme like “hit-man” vs. “run-man”, there is always an amount of cross-cultural miscommunication and misunderstanding going on. When the Dagomba are “agitating” they are not usually aware of their aggression. It is implicit. For them it is experienced as “normal”. It is programmed into their pathways toward achieved status. Nor are they very sensitive to the opposite pathways of the other group. Dagomba are not consciously aware of the Konkomba pathways, or of their wish to be free of all constraints. When they see the Konkomba “take flight”, it is interpreted from their own perspective and it appears to be out of fear or weakness. These mutual blind spots lead to the cross-cultural miscommunication.

Why the Konkomba Seem “Touchy”

When the Konkomba perceive the Dagomba as “pushing” them or “disturbing” them, they are not aware of the culturally conditioned Dagomba “need” to agitate. When they move deeper into the bush, they are not aware that it signals to the Dagomba that they are weak. On the other hand, Konkomba are very sensitive to the presence of anything that upsets the balance of equitable relations. Dagomba would say “overly-sensitive” or “touchy”. Elders are constantly guarding against any infringement on cherished freedoms. They are fearful because once the confrontations start they will not end until there is complete devastation. Thus their “over-sensitivity” is in itself a protective device, a strategy of avoidance.

Egalitarianism and the New Reasons for Avoidance

Konkomba do not interfere with the pathways of others. By the same token, they do not want their pathways to be interfered with. In the past, if this happened, they would make a quick assessment and, if they were too weak, they would usually beat a hasty retreat. To respond was too dangerous and self-defeating. But times have changed. There is no place to retreat to and no longer any need to retreat. This “push-pull” effect is moving them ever deeper into the conflict zone. They are no longer able to avoid others because the world is closing in on them, and at the same time if they are “hit” they have little hesitancy about hitting back because of their new strength. New circumstances have pushed their avoidance neurosis into a kind of cultural psychosis for now it enormously heightens the probability of conflict.

Irresponsible Warriors

The Konkomba have a well-earned reputation for being fierce warriors. A Brigadier whom I interviewed, who had served as a peacekeeper in Sierra Leone, Liberia and N.

Ghana, said that he had great respect for the Konkomba and that they were far better warriors than the Dagomba. If the army had not intervened, he was convinced that the Konkomba would have utterly defeated the chiefly groups. I would respect his views in military matters but his assessment of motives is less than accurate. This is clearly shown by his use of the word 'defeat'. I would prefer to use the word 'devastate', for after the war the Konkomba went back to their farming oblivious to the meaning of 'victory'. They had no wish to 'conquer' or 'rule'. Nor did they use it for political gain. They were only interested in retaliation, in repaying the debt. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the war is that they are so apolitical that they have been unable to translate their military advantage into concrete, positive political and systemic changes. In this sense they are irresponsible as warriors, for this only lays the foundation for senseless, repeated conflict.

Long-term Vs. Short-term Self-preservation

The colonial records are full of references to the fierce Konkomba killing each other over women, cows and land. After one particularly gruesome attack at Zagberi, the British forced them to build a road by hand to remote Saboba so that a police station could be erected to hold them in check (Tait 1961). How is it then that Konkomba say they prefer to take flight rather than to fight? When does their obligation to retaliate outweigh their need for avoidance? When does flight turn to fight?

Here we must first distinguish between long-term self-preservation and freedom, which is the concern of the elders and ancestors, and short-term self-preservation and 'respect' which is the concern of the warriors. The long-term and short-term self-preservation needs are constantly in tension – the latter are more insistent but the former are more important, and here the elders have the last word, the 'veto'. When the group's life, sustenance and freedom are threatened, the option will favour avoidance and override debt-collection. It is better to 'run' and risk some losses than to retaliate and incur greater losses. But when they are 'pushed against the wall' when the very principle of freedom is threatened, when both short-term and long-term welfare coincide, it always leads to 'fight'. The critical mass seems to be reached when there is little to be gained by avoidance or when the combined weight of frustration, vengeance and the real possibilities for successful retaliation overcome the need for avoidance. In the minds of the Konkomba this combination was achieved, perhaps once and for all, in 1994.

Since 1994, the Konkomba are convinced, and they are probably justified in this, that they can take on all the major chiefly groups of the North at once and 'win'. This unalterably changes their avoidance pattern because war is no longer quite the same threat to their long-term welfare. The army is still a deterrent and the elders still have a veto here, but not to the same extent as before²⁹.

According to the post-1994 Konkomba perspective, therefore, the only real reason to 'run' from provocation at the inter-tribal level, is no longer out of fear of being

²⁹ Before 1994 the Konkomba almost never took up arms against the army but now the spell has been broken. Because of the reprisals they suffered at the hands of the army during the 1994 Conflict, and because they were able to overcome soldiers in a number of engagements, there is no longer the same reluctance to fight the army. As far as responsible peacebuilding is concerned, this is a turn for the worse in every respect.

defeated or out of self-preservation but only out of a horror of war and its inherent threat to any kind of freedom. Real development can only come to the region if the people can successfully change their cultural pathways and begin to build a 'peace culture'. *Therefore, more than anything else, those concerned with development and peace need to appeal to this horror of war and their need for freedom.*

Saving Face and Losing Face

What is appropriate and respectful behaviour in one culture may be inappropriate and shameful in another culture. In order to understand the power of the 'hit-man vs. run-man' theme for those involved, we should consider for a moment the power of face-saving and social roles. History has assigned the Dagomba the stronger 'hit-man' role. For the Dagomba, being weak is shameful and out of character. It is a matter of losing face. They have an image to uphold. As so many of them put it when they went off to meet their deaths during the 1994 Northern Conflict, 'If we do not fight we are returning home to eat faeces. We are useless.'

The Power of Roles

In the African context, there is great social pressure to conform. Stress is on the social identity over individual identity. This makes it extremely difficult to distinguish between what people do and who they are. They *are* the role; the role *is* them. There is little flexibility. 'A rotten log cannot change into a crocodile! A crab cannot give birth to a bird!' The preferred role is clearly shown in the 'standard' response in the chart above. It is also shown in the bias of the proverb. When Africans take on a social role it implies a set of prescriptive patterns of behaviour – a set of *do's* and *don'ts*. It is a matter of moral urgency – not merely of preferences – to comply. There is not much leeway. If the role is to 'hit' then the Dagomba must assume that role. The same is to be said for Konkomba 'running'. For a 'hit-man' not to hit, or a 'run-man' not to run is not only shameful, it is immoral. It brings about loss of face and identity. Thus, for the 'chiefly' peoples, running is 'eating faeces'. It is denying their very identity. It is more powerful than the fear of death. Whereas, for the non-chiefly peoples 'hitting first' is the most shameful crime for it thwarts the most basic rule in their egalitarian world: respecting each other's freedom. Better death than this! When Konkombas run, it is not because they are afraid; it is because they are preserving their integrity, their very identity.

The Power of Enactment

Against such odds, how can the power of unity be activated and exercised? How can the negative synergy be transformed into a positive synergy? This will be discussed at length in Part III, but here we can introduce the key notion that it can be activated through 'culture-drama'. The two groups need to be brought together to experience their commonalities in as many situations as possible. They can experience the full power of unity in 'culture-drama'. Then, what is begun in drama can move into the community. From here the institutions of each group, especially chieftaincy, need to initiate and sustain the situations of unity.

Freedom from Cultural Neuroses

The conflictual relations between the Konkomba and Dagomba point to neurotic patterns within each of their separate pathways that prevent development. Among the Dagomba there is a great disparity between their ideals and what they actually do. Proverbs sing the praises of the chief as one who serves his people with nothing for

himself (e.g., 'The chief's guinea fowl is the one in the bush', meaning the chief gives out all the guinea fowls in his house to his guests). Yet, nowadays, chiefs are selling the land of their people and using the profits to enhance their own power and prestige. The Konkomba place less emphasis on ideals and greater emphasis on realities. There is no great disparity between their ideals and their actual behaviour, and they have no problem holding their wealth in common. The problem is that it is frozen. No one can presume to use it for any kind of development or change.

Envisioning a Common Path for Transformation

The foregoing analysis has been offered to help us to begin to envision a common pathway toward a 'culture of peace' and to impress on us its absolute necessity as an alternative to war. To change these patterns is the work of generations, not years. But with a new pathway in focus we can begin to take concrete steps to bring about change. This pathway should involve a dual 'give and take' less 'hitting' from the 'hit-people' and less running and more constructive negotiation on the part of the 'run-people'. The 'hit-people' need to encourage the 'run-people' not to run away, but to learn how to live in close communities, to take a stand and negotiate, to accept some limitations to their freedoms for the common good, and to be pro-active when necessary without breaking into extreme violence. The Dagomba need to help the Konkomba to learn how to be chiefs.

The Right Hand washes the Left

As they say, 'the right hand washes the left.' One group needs to help the other. The Konkomba and Dagomba are structural opposites. Thus they have a mutual responsibility in building the 'peace culture'. Each group is equipped to help the other over their cultural blind spots and neuroses. They are each able to see what the other group cannot see about themselves, and they are each able to offer models of opposing sub-identities that can help the other group to be more balanced, integrated and free. The Dagomba can help the Konkomba to learn how to exchange certain unhealthy freedoms for healthy interdependencies, mutual trust and harmony, and how to establish and build their own institutions of chieftaincy. But before the Dagomba can offer a healthy model of chieftaincy to the Konkomba they must reduce the dissonance between their ideal understanding of themselves and the reality. The Konkomba can help them do this. The Dagomba need to learn more about their own sub-identities from the Konkomba. They need to be more sensitive to the freedoms and constraints of the Konkomba, and Konkomba need to be less sensitive to what they consider constraints, whether real or imagined, on their freedoms. Thus they can and must learn from each other.

BIG-MEN vs. SMALL-MEN

'Big-men' = Chiefly, 'Small-men' = Non-chiefly

The second cultural theme involves power pathways. 'Big-men' vs. 'small-men' could almost be construed as a universal cultural theme. 'Big-men' control 'small-men'. They delegate, 'send' manipulate and squeeze 'small-men'. In short, 'big-men' own 'small-men'. When 'small-men' are empowered, it is by the grace of 'big-men'. 'Big-men' give orders and 'small-men' follow. 'Big-men' do 'big work', they dictate and rule; 'small-men' do menial work, they serve and are ruled. 'Big-men'

enjoy favour and privilege; ÷small-menø are burdened and often oppressed. ÷Big-menø wield authority; ÷small-menø are authorised. ÷Big-menø are the patrons; ÷small-menø are the clients. ÷Big-menø give and receive respect; ÷small-menø give respect and receive favours. Since colonial times, the chiefly groups as a whole have assumed the role of the ÷big-manø in relation to the non-chiefly groups who have assumed the role of ÷small-manø. These roles are now being challenged.

A Plethora of Chiefs

All societies in Ghana make use of the ÷big-manø system, but perhaps none so pervasively as the Dagomba. In Dagbon, the Dagomba traditional state in Northern Ghana, chieftaincy (*naam*) is an overwhelmingly central symbol. Virtually everyone in Dagbon is or can be a chief of something. While spending some time learning Dagbani in a village near Tamale, I was encouraged by the people to take up the title ÷*Samba Naa* (chief of the strangers). There are many such chieftaincies that are available to untitled Commoners. My colleague at TICCS, Fr. Kofi Ron Lange, was recently made ÷*Maligu Naa* (chief of peacemakers). At present he has only the title or access to this chieftaincy. If he wants to enjoy the full prestige, dignity and power of the office he must be ÷installedö or ÷enskinnedö by a higher chiefö something that would entail certain responsibilities and expenditures. The expenditures are for the sacrificial animals, gifts to the installing chief, throwing a party for his guests, and buying the regalia, the emblems of his office.

Plate 2. The Mionlana, a Dagomba paramount chief, at the workshop

Achieved Status

Both the Dagomba and Konkomba have ÷big menø and ÷small menø. The difference is the system by which they become such. As in all state systems, the Dagomba combine ascribed and achieved statuses. But they stress the achieved. Even certain ÷officiallyø ascribed statuses (e.g. certain high level inherited chieftaincies) are ÷achievableø under the right conditions or with enough money or power. The Dagomba learn how to climb the hierarchical ladder at an early age. It is not unusual to see young Dagomba boys, who are Royals, giving orders to women and others who are below their rank. There is great competition for status and high office, especially among the Royals. This has led to endless internal conflicts between the two main chiefly families in Dagbon the ÷Abudusö and ÷Andanisö (Staniland 1975), and most recently to the shocking murder of the Ya Na.³⁰

Among the chiefly groups, the hierarchical structures are far more elaborate and refined. Status must be shown through signs and symbols of high office and marks of ÷respectö, such as removing foot-ware and squatting while greeting a chief. The elaborate hierarchies necessitate rules, which make status-acquisition stable and predictable over time. This tends to promote the status quo. But nowadays things are changing. Today the competition for positions of status is getting out of hand. Rich

³⁰ The murder of the Ya Na, King of Dagbon, who is of the Andani ögateö, along with at least 40 of his entourage on March 26, was allegedly committed by members of the Abudulai gate. It was a particularly grisly and vengeful act because the attackers cut off his head and right arm and carried them jubilantly through the streets of Yendi, in an attempt to discredit him as a chiefö to make it, metaphysically speaking, a ÷bad deathö, and thereby to prevent his funerary rites from being performed, eliminate him from the ranks of former kings and disqualify his sons from succeeding him (see *Daily Graphic*, Thursday, 28 March, 2002 and Noretta 2002).

–small menø are becoming –big menø overnight, and poor –big menø are suddenly losing their influence and power. These pressures are threatening the stability of the entire system.

Ascribed Status

Like all non-chiefly societies, the Konkomba have ascribed, but very few achieved, statuses. Traditionally there were no chieftaincies and very few positions of high office in these egalitarian societies (Froelich 1954 and Tait 1958). Religious and other specialists such as Earth priests, diviners, the custodians of certain powerful shrines and traditional healers, only have status in ritual situations. There are only two hierarchical levels: òthose who can send³¹ othersö and òthose who can be sent by othersö. These are multiplied infinitely. The eldest of the elders has authority over those younger than him. An older brother is higher in status and can òsendö a younger brother; a father can òsendö a son; a son can òsendö a grandson; an elder twin can òsendö a younger twin; and so on. Gender, age, descent and sometimes spirit-election are the only criteria for determining who sends whom.

Ascribed Status and the New Elites

In non-chiefly societies the –pecking orderø may not be apparent to outsiders, but everyone in the clan knows exactly who is over him or her and who is under ò who is older and younger in a real or classificatory sense. Although there are a few symbols of ritual office, for example the divinerø –bagø and the elderø animal skin mantle, these are not symbols of rank. Aside from those marks of respect and obligation that all juniors owe their elders, no unusual signs of respect are offered; no special treatment is given to anyone. The social group is small enough that everybody knows whom he or she can òsendö and who can òsendö him or her. This makes life stable, predictable and manageable within the small group. But nowadays new, non-traditional statuses, outside the traditional cultural framework, are achieved (e.g., the òassemblymenö and other local officials who are elected or appointed). Although these offices are still relatively few, they are increasing and are beginning to affect the overall system. They are also a factor preparing the way for chiefs.

Power Struggle in Dagbon

Today on the fringes of Dagbon, where the Dagomba and Konkomba meet, the –big-manø vs. –small-manø formula is being challenged as never before. In a recent quarrel over the positioning of a new market and the appointment of the òchief of the witchesö³² in Ngani, a village on the periphery of Dagomba territory³³, the Dagomba

³¹ òSendö is a general term relating to any subservient task done on behalf of someone who is older.

³² There are a number of so-called òwitch villagesö in Northern Ghana (e.g. Gambaga, Patinga, Ngani and Kukuö), which seem to have been encouraged, during the colonial era, as an alternative to lynching those accused of witchcraft. In recent years witchcraft accusations have increased dramatically and they often lead to the accused being severely beaten or even killed by outraged villagers, neighbours and relatives of the accused. The witch villages are traditional sanctuaries for witches where it is believed that the witchcraft in the accused persons òdiesö or remains under the control of the Earth shrine of that place. The witches normally live in a sector of the main town around the traditional Earth shrine. In the case of Ngani, the priest or priestess of the shrine is òelectedö by the shrine spirit but usually comes from the family of the Earth shrine custodian. The positioning of the market was on the surface the more important issue. Each group wanted the market in a different place. The main issue, of course, was not the place but the authority of the one who chooses the place.

³³ Ngani is one of several traditional Konkomba towns, which has a Dagomba section and a Dagomba chief. The Dagomba support the chief as the central authority and the Konkomba support their Earth

insisted on doing things their way. But the Konkomba, who are the original settlers at Ngani, and who are in the majority, insisted on choosing the market plot and on their own *õwitchö* chief. According to their custom these are under the jurisdiction of the Earth shrine, not the Dagomba chief.

In the end, when the Dagomba candidate for *õwitch chiefö* went to assume the new role her sacrificial fowl died face down rather than face up indicating the shrine's rejection. This was *õproofö* to the Konkomba that not only was the Dagomba candidate unacceptable, but that Dagomba chiefs did not have the right to appoint a *shrine custodianö*. This was a direct challenge to the primacy of Dagomba chiefs, whose ancestor chiefs killed and appointed their own Earth priests (see Duncan-Johnstone and Blair 1932). The Dagomba chief of Ngani and his colleagues at Yendi bristled with indignation. Dagomba war cries were heard and the Konkomba prepared for battle. Tensions reached such a high state that a government team led by the Minister of Interior, Malik Yakubu, was rushed in by helicopter to cool things down.

New Elites and “Development Contractors”

The complementary roles of *big-manö* vs. *small-manö* are played out in shared concrete situations of decision-making regarding power relations, especially in the distribution and management of resources and services. Today the stakes are higher than ever before. Besides the many means for providing chiefs with money, power and prestige^ö such as inducting labourers, judging cases, levying fines and fees (Skalnik 1983), the newest and largest source of money and power is now *õdevelopment aidö*.

Plate 3. A Konkomba workshop participant dressed in a Dagomba chief's ceremonial smock, the symbol of his office

Formerly the interest of the chiefs was limited to regional and national politics (see Ladouceur 1979) but now their controls over regional and national politics have become the means for securing funding from international NGOs and bilateral donor agencies. *Big-menö* and chiefs are becoming *development contractorsö*³⁴, businessmen, and building contractors to catch the windfall pouring in from International NGOs, development organisations, and governmental ministries with IMF and World Bank financing, while *small-menö* and their mentors complain that these services are for the poorest of the poor. The *big-menö* and chiefs who do not *catch onö* to the new system seem to become more impoverished while the new elite *small-menö* who come to control these resources³⁵, are suddenly more powerful than chiefs.

priest. In the conflictual situation at Ngani we find a microcosm of the relationship between the Dagomba and the Konkomba as a whole. It demonstrates all of the cultural themes.

³⁴ For example, a number of Dagomba politicians, including the vice-president, own construction and contracting businesses, and the ex-Minister of Interior, who recently resigned over the murder of the Ya Na, is the head of a peacebuilding NGO with financial assistance from the German government. It also seems that the Dagomba chief at Ngani was not without his material reasons for wanting to consolidate his authority over that of the Earth shrine custodian. The village of Ngani is the main source of river sand for the whole district and some big road construction contracts have recently been issued for that area.

³⁵ The example that comes to mind first is Bugri Nabu, an opinion leader for the Konkomba, a rich contractor and politician, who started out as a *loading boyö* for Ghana Airways in Tamale.

Conflictual Language

Another important source of provocation in the ‘big-man’ vs. ‘small-man’ theme is conflictual language. The two groups are named and confirmed in their roles through jokes, slurs, name-calling, and in body language. Today much of the language used by the ‘chiefly’ groups still evokes memories of master-slave and superior-inferior positions of a former, more openly oppressive era. This goads and provokes the ‘non-chiefly’ groups more than ever before. The Anufo, for example, who are another chiefly group north of Yendi, still call the Konkomba *õbungbefõ* which means, ‘the buttocks are exposed uselessly’ (a reference to the fact that in the recent past the Konkomba did not wear clothes whereas the ‘chiefly’ peoples had looms, wove cotton and put on clothes).

Plate 4. Dagomba man relaxing in his compound

Plate 5. Konkomba man relaxing in his compound

The Dagomba call the Konkomba *õKpankpaãõ*³⁶ (lit. ‘õYou [that] Konkomba!’). It implies that they are the superior group and the Konkomba are their inferiors. In daily language there are frequent references to the former master-slave relationship and often the very tone of the language is discriminatory: ‘õWho are you to me?õ õYou are our slaves.õ õAm I a Konkomba that I should have to pay ‘*lampo*’ (taxes)?õ õWho are you!õ õI am a Dagomba, the land is for me!õ

A Tribe within a Tribe

In Dagbon, the ‘big-man’ vs. ‘small-man’ theme reduces the Konkomba to a ‘minority’ sub-group within the tribe. It disregards the autonomous character of ethnicity. This is made easier by the weak ethnic identity of the Konkomba, who in many ways appear to be very similar to the Dagomba (see Plates 4 and 5). A stronger Konkomba ethnic identity would be a powerful equaliser here. The Dagomba, of course, recognise the Konkomba language and culture as different from theirs but they do not give them the same respect as they would to another chiefly group. They do not relate to them as a distinct ethnicity. Their language and culture are more often regarded as a lack of a ‘real’ language and a ‘real’ culture. To the Dagomba, their ‘real’ identity is at the lowest rung of the Dagomba incorporative hierarchy. If they want to advance, they need to start at the bottom and climb the hierarchical ladder slowly, according to the implicit rules of Dagomba society: by showing respect, by intermarriage (Konkomba women marrying Dagomba men), by fostering their children with higher ranking Dagomba families, by first taking on low level responsibilities within the Dagomba system, by plying chiefs for favours, by buying low level chieftaincies, but above all, by speaking, thinking and acting like a Dagomba (see Kirby 1998b).

³⁶ The Parliamentarian for Saboba, Nayon Bilijo, while speaking at the Nsawam workshop, told a story of something that happened a few years earlier when he was a Minister of Government, of some Dagomba youth using this word quite unconsciously while he was being introduced to take the chair at an official function at Tamale. Everyone laughed, and even though it pained him to hear it, he held back his anger because it was such an unconscious act on their part. He merely mentioned that the time is past for using such expressions because many would take offence.

Lack of Ethnic Identity

In the past it was very difficult for the non-chiefly groups to resist assimilation. If they wanted to 'move up' in the world, it could only be along the Dagomba path. They didn't have a choice. To them it was simply 'the way things are'; it was the only path to progress. Underneath this phenomenon was the inability of the chief-less peoples to form a strong ethnic or 'tribal' identity – one that could interact as an equal with a state society. The only way they could be recognised at all was by taking on a new identity within a chiefly group. In the past they had clan and 'sub-tribal' identities but not a 'tribal' one. Language was not a strong 'tribal' identity qualifier because of the enormous number of small dialectical differences, nor was territoriality, because of their tradition of migrating in search of more fertile fields. Formerly, their weak extra-clan identity made it easy for them to be assimilated into state systems. At first they would have dual identities and then, after a generation or two, the weaker, non-chiefly cultural identity would gradually disappear.

Literacy and Ethnic Identity

Over the last quarter of a century this has changed because of education and especially because of indigenous language literacy. The various Konkomba clans and sub-tribes have now become aware that their language, all dialectical differences aside, is essentially the same. The same has happened among other non-chiefly peoples. Many non-chiefly groups now share a common Bible. They realise that they can read and write, communicate and be mutually understood in their common language. I have heard one literacy worker excitedly remark: 'Now even God speaks to us in our own language'³⁷. The most active and buoyant literacy project in Ghana is with the Konkomba. Furthermore it is the only one that is completely self-supporting³⁸. All this has been enormously confirming. A common language means they are one people.

Although the Konkomba sense of identity as a people having their own language and customs is still somewhat amorphous and highly situational,³⁹ nowadays it is developing fast. They are no longer required to identify with the nearest dominant chiefly group in order to 'fit in' or be recognised. Instead of being low status members of a chiefly group they can be themselves: 'Konkomba', 'Nawuri', 'Vagla', 'Moba', etc.

Educated Elites vs. Non-literates

Today most of the educated elites of the non-chiefly groups are pressing their fellow tribes/peoples to opt for 'being themselves' for discovering their own cultural identities. To those from the chiefly groups this is very difficult to understand and accept. They honestly feel that the lowest rung of their own Dagomba identity is much preferable to any other identity the Konkomba may have or wish to choose – indeed, it is their only 'real' identity. From their perspective it seems like those at the lowest levels of their society are suddenly trying to break the rules of 'respect' and rise above their correct status. It seems that they want to become chiefs and 'big men' without going through the process that everyone else in Dagbon has to follow.

³⁷ The words of a Nawuri catechist, who is active in literacy training.

³⁸ My informant is in the literacy program of the Ghana Institute of Languages, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) in Tamale.

³⁹ Perhaps the most recognised 'situational' instance of their organisational ability is their readiness to assemble for war and the fact that they have common rules of warfare.

Now Non-chiefly Peoples want their own Chiefs

Among the non-chiefly peoples, from a traditional perspective, the only time that chiefs were useful was when there was a wider inter-clan dispute to settle or activity to arrange—something that could not be done by a clan head or elders. Their hierarchies were limited to family, kin and clan, and very recently have begun to include their own chiefs. The chiefs, whether appointed by the chiefly groups or elected by the people, are under-utilised. But, as the larger world invades their small reality, as pressure on the land increases, and as the already scarce resources further diminish, they are more and more constrained either to fit themselves into the lower rungs of the state hierarchies or to develop their own comparative system of chiefs and achieved statuses. Modernisation is bringing the issue to a head.

Land Tenure and Paramount Chiefs

This pressure is now becoming intense. It is being exerted in different ways and degrees in different places. In the Northern Region extreme pressure is being exerted via the land tenure system. In the South the idea of ‘custodianship’ over the land changed to ‘ownership’ quite naturally because of cocoa. By the 1920s, the mass production of cocoa had replaced ‘slash and burn’ subsistence agriculture. But it took so long (7-10 years) for the trees to begin to produce that in order for the farmer and his family to enjoy the full fruits of their labour the cocoa farm needed to be inherited.

In the North, however, the idea of land ‘ownership’ is still very new. It was introduced in a legal sense with a change in the Constitutions in 1978. The change stipulated that the land of the Northern Region is to be held by the paramount chiefs on behalf of their own people. But no provision was made for the groups without paramount chiefs. Peoples without them are, even now, legally landless (see Skalnik 1983). For the Konkomba and other so-called ‘minority groups’ who are attached to the land, this is unimaginable and untenable. As more of them are being educated, taking on new achieved statuses, forming their own hierarchies, constructing their own identities and building their own status ladder, as it were, they are also seeking their own paramount chieftaincies.

Dancing Pathways

For a positive synergy to be activated in the ‘big-man’ vs. ‘small-man’ theme, it will require the balanced and harmonious interaction of both roles—like two dancing partners, one taking the lead and the other following—to produce something beautiful. Changing to a positive synergy may also mean changing dance steps or even changing the lead, but always with poise.

Today the authority of chiefs is being abused and usurped by those with wealth and power. The power and prestige that formerly were given only to chiefs are now on the auction block, offered to the highest bidder. The elites and the educated Commoners of the chiefly groups are seeking high status without responsibilities. The ‘small-man’ is usurping the ‘big-man’s’ role but without the traditional bonds and healthy constraints of relationships. This ‘dance’ always brings tension whether it is led by the chiefs or the non-chiefly elites. Here too the Dagombas have much to learn from the Konkombas. The language of suppression will give way to one of mutual respect and pride only when the Konkomba identity is fully developed and expressed. And Konkombas need the help of Dagombas to achieve their new identity.

LAND-PEOPLE vs. EARTH-PEOPLE

The Material Economy vs. the Spiritual Economy

This brings us to the third cultural theme, which involves clashing economic pathways. It concerns two dimensions of the physical world. The *landlord* role emphasises the ownership and control of physical property, while the *Earth priest* role emphasises metaphysical *ownership* or the power to influence the *Earth* its bounty, and its power to nurture and sustain life. The chiefly groups have taken role of *landlords* or *owners of the land*, those who hold political and economic rights in the land, while the non-chiefly groups have always had the ancient ritual and metaphysical roles of the first settlers. They hold the earth on behalf of the Earth spirits but do not *own* land as such. They remain the custodians of the Earth spirits, who in their view are the only real landowners. The Earth spirit, or the *Earth* as a spiritual force, controls the rain and the fertility of the soil, and nourishes the crops and animals. It provides for the good fortune, health and sustenance of those occupying the land, and for the well being of the flora and fauna, and all living things on the land. The non-chiefly peoples do not *own* the land because it is not theirs. It belongs to the Earth, the ancestors, and the Creator.

“The Land is for Us!”

Land-people and *Earth-people* refer not just to the two central figures of the landlord-chief and Earth shrine custodian and the two opposed worldviews that they each represent. They also include two groups of peoples that identify with these figures and worldviews: the *people of the land* and the *people of the Earth*. One group accents the visible, material world, while the other group accents the unseen world of the spirits.

In Ghana, the Dagomba call themselves the landlords or *owners* of the land. *“The land is for us,”* they say. *“It is ours by conquest.”* The term *owner* can mean *master* in the sense of the principal or one in charge, as in the *master of the bicycles* meaning a bicycle repairer (see Naden 1984). But it does not mean that he or she could do anything with the bicycles. Among the Dagomba, the chiefs are the *masters* of the land but, at least traditionally speaking, they could not do anything they wanted with the land.

Master of the Land and Master of the People

The *land*, in former times referred to the aegis of rule, the kingdom (*naam*) in both its conceptual and geographical senses. But above all, it referred to the peoples ruled. The geographical and material sense was unimportant. Although there was always the potential for the *land* to be understood in this way, this potentiality was not actuated until quite recently. Nowadays, the sense in which it means the *master* of the physical property has become more important than *master* of the people. Now some chiefs have taken the land to be their own property to farm, or to give away, or sell to others, or to dispose of as they please. They are also buying and selling chieftaincies with this in mind⁴⁰. In effect, they are beginning to operate out of a new

⁴⁰ As a case in point, the chief of Tamale, the Gulkpe Na, has been dead for four years without a replacement because the interim chief, the Regent, is getting rich with land sales while he waits for the

symbolic understanding or ðmythö of ownership and land, which is being created in our time.

Land as ‘People of the Land’

Jack Goody (1971) speaks of the pre-colonial West African states as not being interested in land as such but rather in the people who tamed the land, who worked it and made it productive. Chiefs sought control over people, not the land. The elders say: ðKnowing the people is more than having landö (*a mi niriba n-gari a mi tinsi*) (Lange 1998). Land was regarded as limitless and free for all but quite useless without labour. It was peoplesø skills, labour and connection with the spirit world that made the land life-giving, productive and useful. The desirable commodity was people, not land, and this required a balance of physical and moral controls. Today the balance is off. The emphasis is reversed.

Land as Property

Over the last 40 years, with African Independence and the incursion of modern influences, these perspectives have radically changed. Now land has become valuable in itself. It has become ðpropertyö (for more on this theme see Kirby 1998a, 1998b). Chiefs and Royals are selling it to the general public, to NGOs and to other interested parties from all sides. Political issues and alignments follow the profitability of land. Educated elites and urban Commoners also conspire to gain a share of the profits. All of this goes on much to the annoyance of those Commoners who are still in the villages on the land. To them the ðEarthö is still a sacred entity, much as it is to the non-chiefly peoples.

The Need for Legal Title

As a result of these influences, today land use is increasingly being made contingent on formal ownership, and in many places, the chiefs, not the Earth priests, have the legal title to the land. In Ghana, the state does not recognise the claim of the Earth priest over the land as an economic claim, but only a ritual claim. However, it does recognise the economic claims of the chiefs (see Skalnik 1983). The problem is that there are still large areas of the Northern Region, inhabited by non-chiefly peoples, where land matters are under the aegis of Earth priests. In these areas, so as not to be left without any legal title to the land, the people are now trying to raise them to the level of chiefs. They also wish to maintain their own ethnic identity, so they are trying to develop their own cultural forms of chieftaincy. In many cases⁴¹ they are choosing to combine both earthly and spiritual powers, instead of opting for the more secular chiefly structures of the chiefly groups.

Money vs. Relationships

The changeover from ðlandö understood primarily as people and as the aegis of rule or ðkingdomö to land as property, an economic resource to be bought and sold, represents a major, unsettling change from the traditional economies of relationshipsö including the ritual relationships with the sacralized ðEarthö to a

bids of claimants to go higher. The next Tamale chief stands to make a fortune from the sale of land. So numerous claimants have come forward with their ðofferingsö. The highest offer will win.

⁴¹ I found this to be especially so among the Komba living between Gushiegu and Nalerigu in Mamprusi territory. Since the 1994 Conflict they have been rejecting the chiefs appointed by their Dagomba and Mamprusi overlords and appointing their own chiefs. In many cases the new ðchiefö is the younger brother or son of the Earth shrine custodian.

modern monetary economics, which places its value in material objects and in land as a commodity, its faith in science and its trust in production. This sets up a conflictual dichotomy between the new and the old, between dependency on the *seen world* vs. the *unseen world* between science and religion, and (often) between the fulfilment of short-term needs vs. long-term needs, that is summarised in claims of *land-people* vs. *Earth-people*

Curators of the Earth

The non-chiefly groups are the original settlers of the land. They antedate the state systems. It has been demonstrated on linguistic evidence, for example, that Konkomba peoples were spread throughout the eastern half of the Northern Region long before the arrival of the state peoples (see Strevens 1955). They are the *custodians* of the sacral Earth. In many places, when the chiefly groups need to pacify the Earth spirits, they still call upon the non-chiefly groups to do it for them. When misfortunes arise, in times of drought, famine or epidemics, they turn to the Earth priest for help. The non-chiefly peoples *know* the spirits of the Earth. They are the curators of the land (see Kirby 1986 and Tengan 1991). In their view the forefathers of the chiefly groups may have *conquered* the non-chiefly peoples, but they didn't win the land from non-chiefly peoples because it was never theirs to give (see Kirby 1998a). It was not land, but rather people who were conquered, and, according to Goody (1971), they were just driven further into the bush. They were raided but never ruled.

Plate 6. Market scene in Tamale

A Sacred Ecology

To the Konkomba and Dagomba peasants alike, it is the life-giving productivity of the earth that is important. Its fertility proceeds from the Earth. The earth is not a commodity but the basis of a fragile relationship between people and the elements, the ancestors and the spirit world. To them an older law still applies. Land ought not to be bought and sold. It cannot belong to any person or group of persons as such. Farmers own only their labour and their crops, not their land itself. For them, the land or the earth made into a commodity for buying and selling is unimaginable (Kirby 1998a).

Plate 7. Buying and selling enactment: a conflictual context

A Moral Issue or Survival Issue?

From the perspective of the peasant, the buying and selling of land is a moral issue. To those attached to the land, buying and selling it seems like a lie or outright theft, for it does not belong to them. It belongs to the Earth and the ancestors. It is against their sensibilities, their custom, the will of the ancestors, and it is against the will of the Earth itself. To do so is to play with danger. There will be serious consequences. The fragile balance must be maintained or life will cease. And yet, as good farmland becomes scarcer and more valuable, more costly and less accessible to the peasants who are working the land, it becomes a survival dilemma. As more and more move out of subsistence farming, as they flood into the towns and cities looking for salaried jobs, old sensibilities fade and new priorities emerge. Liberated from the land, they are enslaved to money. For them, too, it is a matter of survival. With hunger on their doorsteps they will take their chances with the anger of the Earth.

Entrepreneurs and Individualists on the Rise

Linked to the changeover in the basic concepts of land, are the freedoms that arise from individualism and modern capitalism. These processes are occurring among all the ethnic groups, although the chiefly tribes have a head start, as it were. The North is ideal for large-scale production of field rice, cotton, shea-nut and cashews. Ghana's first attempt to enter into mass rice production in the late 1960s and early 1970s ended in disaster when the Commoners of the chiefly groups rebelled. They needed their land for food production, and resented the big profits that the Royals were taking away, so in the end they burnt the rice farms.⁴²

Now, thirty years later, under pressure from the World Bank and other international donor/debtors, the government of Ghana is once again emphasizing the production of cash crops, especially in the North. But it is with a crucial difference. Now it is on a more modest scale and it is not the Royals and politicians who are organising the production, but the mid-level elites—educated farmers and local entrepreneurs—of both the chiefly and non-chiefly peoples, Royals and Commoners. I was amazed to find, on a recent visit to the Konkomba area near Saboba, a number of cashew farms of up to 50 acres. One had been established by an educated native of the area, who is now living in London but visits Saboba twice a year to supervise his farm.

New Models for Land and Chieftaincy

In forming a new peace culture there are different models of chieftaincy available. The model of the Akan states in Southern Ghana, for example, is very different from the kinds of chieftaincy in the North. Akan chieftaincy is still fundamentally based in the metaphysical relations with the Earth—although, given today's economic and political trends, this does not always appear to be the primary concern of the modern Akan states. In the South, state formation grew out of the spiritual links to the Earth (see Cardinal 1920). As the legend puts it, 'the Asante people came out of a hole in the ground.' Today the Akan are trying to return these moral foundations. They are searching for ways to accommodate the modern social, political and economic trends to the metaphysical foundations of chieftaincy. They are turning towards the old ritual relations with the Earth. Any vision for a chieftaincy that nurtures rather than exploits, needs to recognise these ritual foundations.

An Interactive Confluence of Cultural Pathways

If we were to envision an interactive confluence of cultural pathways in a peace-system, it would have to combine the concepts of 'land' and 'Earth' in an accessible and balanced way for both cultures. The 'people of the land' need to take on more of the qualities of the 'people of the Earth'. They need to be more curators of the land and their people and less despoilers; while the 'people of the Earth' need to learn to enter the modern world, to think in a more material way, more in terms of property, profits and losses, and, regarding causality, more in terms of scientific facts than spirit agencies. But old ways die hard. Conflict, poverty, piecemeal development and the pressures of sheer survival make progress sporadic. For example, even the educated farmers still can't seem to help themselves from selling their crops cheaply at harvest time and later in the year having to sell their animals in order to buy back their crops

⁴² The farms that were burnt by the annoyed peasantry were located around Nasia and Jimli in Dagbon, and around Katanga in Gonja.

at inflated prices. Both groups need to work together for their mutual development. Both the spiritual and material economies need to be blended.

GOD-PEOPLE vs. EARTH-PEOPLE

The two Dimensions of the Spirit World

A fourth theme involves metaphysical pathways. The terms 'God-people' and 'Earth-people' refer to two philosophical dimensions—the universal and the particular. They refer to the two cosmic dimensions—the sky and the earth. They also have religious dimensions. The universal God's association with the sky and the 'tribal God's association with the earth are central themes of African religion. Since ancient times peoples throughout Africa and the Middle East have experienced a mixture of these two spiritual dimensions—the spirit of the Sky⁴³ and the spirit of the Earth—as expressions of God's transcendence and immanence.

Here, again, the distinction cuts across both the Dagomba and Konkomba. It puts the Dagomba Commoners together with ordinary Konkomba on the one hand, and the Dagomba Royals and educated elites together with Konkomba educated elites on the other.

Universal God and Tribal God

In West Africa, the term 'God-people' has been used to refer to those, especially Muslim clerics, who specialised in their relationship to the transcendent God through the 'book' the written word. The chiefly peoples are associated with the Sky and the 'Sky God' while the non-chiefly peoples are associated with the earth, the 'Earth spirit and the 'tribal God'. Both the Konkomba and the Dagomba have a word for God but the concepts behind this word differ. The Konkomba call God *õUmbworö* (lit. *õmasterö* or *õlord,ö* as in master or lord of the universe). There is a universal element to it, but it is not a Sky God. It is primarily linked to their Earth-bound existence. It is a 'tribal God'. In contrast to this, the Dagomba word for God is *Naawuni* (*õSky Chiefö*). It is connected with the Sky God, the universal God.

The Immanent and Transcendent

The 'Sky people' or 'God-people' are the people of the sky, the overarching firmament. Their God is transcendent. They experience Earth spirits as 'children' or the offspring of God, and the earth as matter, as a means to reach the transcendent, but also a limitation, an impediment. They look to the sky for life, meaning and sustenance. The 'Earth-people' are attached to earth. They are tied to the ancestral spirits, the 'Earth spirits. They experience the earth as 'Earth' a sacred physical expression of a metaphysical reality. Their God is immanent. They look to the Earth as the source of life-giving power, a visible symbol of the unseen world, and the source of all life and fertility anchored in the soil. For them the 'Sky God' is a distant, unknown Creator—for everyday needs, not very necessary⁴⁴.

⁴³ There has always been both a tension and a certain complementarity between the two. For Ancient Israel it was between the Earth God, Yahweh, and the Sky God, Elohim. They are the two aspects of the one God—the tribal and universal (see Loewen 1986) and the entire history of the Israelites can be summed up in terms of their relationship at different times and places with these divine polarities.

⁴⁴ The universal God is only needed for solving the typical trans-territorial problems like drought and widespread epidemics (see Kirby 1986).

Complementary and Conflictive World-views

These two orientations to the spirit world, the universal God and the tribal God, are at the same time complementary and conflictive. The -Skyø and the -Earthø are personified spiritual and moral presences that have cosmic dimensions. They embody two distinct worldviews and sets of relationships in the unseen world. The Sky God points to vertical relations, the -tribal Godø to horizontal; one is transcendent, the other immanent. From ancient times, peoplesø association with -Skyø made possible long distance travel, conquest, trade and the new ideas, new inventions, and the new products that came with this. From early times, chiefly peoples looking to -Skyø were freed to traverse the spiritual and physical boundaries of the earth, to move through the fixed geographical islands of clans and small hostile tribes, to trade, raid and establish chieftaincies.

The -Earth-peopleø or non-chiefly peoples, on the other hand, were and still are attached to the soil, the horizontal plane. Even when they migrate to new farmlands they are subject to the -Earthø spirit of their new geographical confines. They are nourished and sustained by -Earthø and by nature, but they are also limited by its territoriality. These limitations have etched themselves into their way of life and their worldview. They are limited by the local geography, the local spirits, the ancestors and by their horizontal cosmology with its limited vision, its idea of destiny, and its broad view of the past and narrow window on the future. They are caught up in lifeø cycle and cannot break out of this cycle by themselves. They need the help of the -God-peopleø (see Kirby 2002).

God-people and Chieftaincy

The intimate connection between the idea of a universal God and the concept of chieftaincy and state is not new. It has to do with peoplesø needs for systems of explanation, prediction and control in a wider world (see Horton 1993:375 and 1975). Raiders and traders needed a geographically broader-based God, a moveable God, a God not limited to one place, nor devoted to one people. The interests and activities of the Earth deities were limited to their well-defined territories, and to the fertility and harmonious existence of those who inhabited these places. These limitations did not apply to the universal God, whose domain was the overarching vault of the sky. His transcendent interests and activities could not be limited by the affairs of the earth, by time or place or by any preferences for peoples and tribes living in particular times and places. The transcendent domain of the Sky God was trans-territorial and trans-tribal. It extended to all places and all peoples. As the elders say: øGod likes everyoneö interpreted: øGodø's blessing is offered to all impartiallyö (Plissart 1983:250, #2023). Thus the Dagomba and those attached to the Sky God were not as hampered by territorial constraints, taboos and local Earth deities, as were the Konkomba.

The universal God of the Dagomba is intimately linked to their concept of chieftaincy. If the Akan chieftaincy comes forth from the earth, the Dagomba chieftaincy comes down from above. The *naam* made it possible to incorporate new groups, new territories, and new deities within an overarching political, economic, familial and religious framework. It engendered an essentially new way of understanding their relationship to God and the lesser spirits. The Dagomba, like others with centralised state systems in West Africa, had come to link the principles of political supremacy

embodied in the *naam* to the overarching principle of God's supremacy. In God (*Naawuni*), the rulers of Dagbon had discovered an essential ally and a model for their political supremacy. It articulated what seemed to them a self-evident truth: that the world is hierarchical. Just as God had authority over the lesser deities, rulers were naturally superior to Commoners or conquered peoples.

The elders say: 'God has killed and the Earth gets to eat.' In this proverb Plissart tells us: 'Allusion is made between the heaven and earth, Commoner and ruler duality. Commoners and Konkomba are asked to sacrifice to the Earth and the ancestors, for protection. But the ruling estate worships the spirit of the chief, *naa wuni*. This spirit is connected with the sky, *wun ta ãa* (lit. God's stone), rather than the Earth. Dependants may make claims but it's the master who provides' (Plissart 1983: 391, #3574). To have the 'Sky God' on their side was everything they needed. By this connection they had mastery over all those who were attached to the earth, those bound by the Earth shrines, circumscribed by mountains, rivers and valleys and the onus of territoriality. Thus we find in the concepts of mobility, hierarchy and transcendence the source of this complementary relationship between the universal God and chieftaincy (see Kirby 2002).

'God-people' and Islam

Across the West African savannahs 'God-people' have long been associated with Muslim clerics (see Levtzion 1968). In Northern Ghana the Gonja state gives us a good example of the influence of these clerics (see Goody 1973). Their three 'estate' system, consisting of Royals at the top, the Muslims in the middle, and the Commoners at the bottom, became a kind of model for the role of Muslims within other Northern state systems like the Mamprusi, the Dagomba and Nanumba. These itinerate 'God-people' attached themselves to chiefs and kings by offering their prayers and amulets for victory in battle, success in trade, and power over the spirit world. They also offered their literate skills as scribes, clerks and historians. With their service came a new vision and unbridled spirit as immense as the sky. The chiefly peoples became associated with the 'God-people' and subdued the 'Earth-people'. Non-chiefly peoples who sought to become 'God-people' sacrificed their ethnic identity in doing so, for only the chiefly peoples could be 'God-people'.

Plate 8. Author talks with Muslim participants

Islam in Dagbon

Dagomba links to Islam began much later than those of the Gonja. They trace back to Ya Na Zanjina, who established a Muslim enclave at his court early in the 18th century (see Wilks 1965). But, as with the Gonja, only the Royals could convert to Islam and until very recently they didn't 'convert'. There was no need to. They were already considered 'honorary' Muslims⁴⁵. The Muslims remained an elite clerical class of professional holy men, amulet-makers, court advisors and scribes until the colonial era. In the early 1900s, it was the freed slaves who first converted to Islam. Then, by the 60s and 70s, Dagomba Commoners began converting to Islam in small

⁴⁵ When I first met the Ya Na in 1976, I thought that he was Muslim because of his long flowing robes. But when I asked him about it he and his whole entourage laughed uproariously. He then told me that no Dagomba chief could ever be a Muslim because of the sacrifices he must make to the various shrines. Today the standard response of most Dagomba chiefs is: 'We Dagomba chiefs are Muslim and have always been Muslim.'

numbers trying to access higher rank and privilege. In the late 80s and early 90s, almost by common agreement, the chiefs and Royals turned en-masse to Islam. Their conversion was politically motivated. By the 90s the disenfranchised youth from the distant villages began joining the new fundamentalist missionary groups, especially the *Ali-suna*, arriving from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Over the last fifteen years the Dagomba have increasingly been converting to these new brands of Islam. In doing so they are no longer maintaining their traditional religiosity but are moving toward a new religiosity and new ways of achieving status.

Christianity in Dagbon

In more recent times, Christianity has also been on the rise in Dagbon. Christian missions only got started after WWII. But by the early 60s mission schools and clinics were established in the main towns in the Northern Region (see Kirby 2002) and they began to attract converts among the school children. The Christian converts were mainly from among the Dagomba Commoners and the non-chiefly peoples. It was all part of what they called 'getting your eyes opened' or entering the modern world. Since they already had access to education during the colonial regime, the Royals did not show much interest. For the Konkomba, there was an additional advantage - it enabled them to raise their status, to become 'God-people' and to enter modern life without losing their ethnic identity.

Although the Christian missions divided their attention almost equally among chiefly and non-chiefly peoples, the mission among the non-chiefly groups has been credited as more successful. This is because, in spite of the relatively few converts among the Konkomba (only about 8 per cent are Christian), they are the educated elite and the new leaders, and they have exercised a disproportionate influence on their people.

The impact of Christianity among the Dagomba has not been as obvious as it has been among the Konkomba. Only 2 - 3 per cent of the Dagomba population are Christian (Boi-Nai and Kirby 1998). The low percentage has been mainly due to chiefly politics, the perception of Christianity as a European religion and the influence of Islam. But Christianity has had a greater influence on Dagbon than these statistics suggest. Over the last 40 years a continuous stream of Dagomba school children have been baptised as they went through Christian schools. But as soon as these educated youth left their villages, where most adhere to traditional religion, to seek employment, marriage or simply accommodation in the towns and cities, where the Muslims are in the majority, they were forced to become Muslims. As a result, I estimate that as many as 25 per cent of the Muslim Dagomba are very favourable toward Christianity. This group is very influential because they are educated, they are at the middle range of society and a large proportion of them are women. They are opinion leaders and in a position to influence both those at the grass roots in the villagers and those in leadership positions in local and national government (see Kirby 2002).

Overall, the number of Christians in both groups is increasing and, as they enter the modern world, their new unbounded worldview is leading to a greater sense of control over their lives, to the creation of ascribed statuses and, especially among the Konkomba, to a desire for greater organisation and their own brand of chieftaincy.

Religious Conversions

The conversions to Christianity and Islam since Ghana's Independence have been for a mixture of social, political and economic reasons. Religiosity, too, has entered in, but this needs to be viewed from a cultural perspective. West African Islam has always been rooted in an African religiosity and it has accommodated traditional practices. Until very recently, conversion did not require a change in religious culture. But now this is changing. The new fundamentalist missionaries, especially the *Ali-suna* groups (including the *al Qaeda*), militantly endorse a version of Arab culture and religiosity (see Seidu 1989). This is bringing about severe divisions in the Islamic community. Many Muslim converts are ambivalent towards the new Arab culture-based fundamentalisms. They want the international alliances, the prestige and status, the new global identities, the development aid, and the political and economic advantages that the new missionary sects bring, but they also want to keep their own African religiosity.

Nowadays, Christians, too, are divided on the cultural issue. In the former era, Christian missionaries usually required of converts an outer cultural change to testify to the inner spiritual one. European Christianity generally viewed African religiosity as backward or evil and demanded that it be rejected. Thus the outward cultural change was toward European culture. Although this approach succeeded with many peoples, it did not succeed among the Dagomba (see Kirby 2002). Now some fundamentalist Christian sects are pressing this approach even further with the complete rejection of African religiosity and culture, while others, especially the Catholics⁴⁶, are trying to reverse this in order to rebuild Christianity on an African religiosity. This acceptance of African religiosity is striking a familiar chord with both non-chiefly peoples and chiefly Commoners (see Kirby 2002).

African Religiosity vs. Western Secularism

The God-people vs. Earth-people opposition reflects the more general tension that exists between secularism and religiosity in our modern world. The new God-people are often irreligious; they are the secular agents, the representatives of the material world order. Their school training, their future perspective and hands on approach toward development and problem-solving have greatly reduced the influence of destiny and the witchcraft mentality. Through their influence, both groups are coming to see the value of education, science and modern medicine, and they getting the help they need to enter the modern world. But they are losing touch with the spirit world. The new Earth-people, on the other hand, whether they are from the chiefly or non-chiefly groups, tend to be the agents and influences for a traditional worldview and an African religiosity, with links to the ancestors and a reliance on the spirit world.

New Commonalities

As with the other three themes, the two seemingly opposed orientations of God-people vs. Earth-people are not disconnected polarities. Dagombas say: "There is something of what is up in what is down" [and vice-versa, for the proverb is used

⁴⁶ Following up the momentous changes brought about by the Vatican II Council, the Catholic Bishops of Ghana have been slowly fostering a process of inculturation. On the grounds that any form of Christianity which demands a cultural conversion before a faith conversion is not following the incarnational model and is therefore unchristian, they are putting increasing emphasis on African belief systems as the starting point for an African Christianity.

either way] (*Dim be zuggsaa dim be tiåa*) (Lange 1998). The two orientations cut across both ethnic groups. -Earth-peopleø include both Dagomba Commoners and ordinary Konkomba. -God-peopleø include Dagomba Royals and the educated elites together with Konkomba educated elites. In them are joined the other seemingly opposed orientations such as: the universal God vs. tribal God, Islam and Christianity vs. African Traditional Religion and the opposing worldviews: the vertical vs. horizontal, the sky vs. the earth, transcendent vs. immanent, and the sacred vs. the profane. All these sets of orientations cut across the two ethnic groups.

The new commonalities are bridging the gap, fostering a union of opposites, and new identities are forging new alliances. Non-chiefly Christians are forming a new -God-peopleø and, in this way, bridging the gap between themselves and chiefly peoples and Muslims. Dagomba Muslims, educated in Christian schools, are silently bridging the gaps between Muslims and Christians, as well as between chiefly peoples and non-chiefly peoples. The Catholic Churchø stress on inculturation is helping to bridge the gap between Christians, adherents of African Traditional Religion and the more traditional Muslims, as well as the worldview gap between the vertical and horizontal, the transcendent and the immanent, the universal and tribal God.

The Sky and the Earth in a 'Peace Culture'

No vision for a future -peace cultureø is complete if it cannot accommodate the religiosity of both cultural pathways, that of -Sky-peopleø and the -Earth-peopleø. The vision needs to recognise the place of a universal God and endorse the global freedom that this brings. But at the same time it needs to recognise the place of the -tribal Godø with its deep African religious roots, its intimate connection to the -Earthø and the ancestors, and its moral doctrine of ðabundant lifeö⁴⁷. The relationship between these two must move from conflict and mutual destruction to co-existence and mutual assistance. This movement toward a new -peace cultureø involves bridging a series of gaps: the gap between tradition and modernity, the seen and the unseen worlds, the religions of nature and those of the book, a tribal God and a universal God, and the -Earthø and the -Skyø. This bridging process, as we have shown, has already begun, and it is peacebuilding at its best, for it lessens the conflictive relations between the non-chiefly and chiefly groups at the deepest levels of identity and motivation.

Mutual Assistance

In religious matters, as in politics and economics, both groups need to learn from each other. The Dagomba need to learn from the Konkomba to recognise the importance of the religiosity of the Earth and its moral principles. They need to lessen the hold of power politics and materialism in their lives. The Konkomba can learn from the Dagomba how to look to the sky and seek its expansive freedoms, how to break out of the traditional cycle, how to broaden their relations and live with others beyond the homestead. Together they can seek the knowledge of the -Skyø i.e., science and freedom from ignorance and disease, without despising their own indigenous knowledge and the spirit world. Together they can reduce the oppositions at the roots of conflict and bridge the gaps in their cultural pathways. Together they can build a new set of identities (see Boi-Nai and Kirby 1999).

⁴⁷ Catholic theologian, Laurenti Magesa (1997), holds that research into African religiosity has now uncovered enough commonalities to speak of ðAfrican Religionö as a ðworld religionö with the principle of ðadundant lifeö as its moral code.

Times are Changing in Dagbon

Formerly, Dagombas were the *big-men*, *hit-men*, *land-men* and *God-men*. Times are changing and so are the cultural themes. The unities and divisions in these cultural themes no longer follow ethnic lines. The new *big-men* are the educated elites. Education has brought high status, prestige and power to within everyone's grasp (see Kirby 2002, 1998a). It has become increasingly precarious to pursue the old agitator role, for it brings a *war culture* to its logical conclusion both internally with the constant fighting between the Royal gates and externally in terms of the wars with other tribes, especially the Konkomba. The new *hit-men* must learn to agitate for human rights and freedoms. Today, the Dagomba are caught between two economies, a materialistic one vs. one of relationships with its roots in the spirit world. It is in the light of these transitions that the moral influence of Christianity and Islam must ultimately be assessed. The question is which way to a new peace culture.

Times are Changing in Konkombaland

Formerly, all Konkomba assumed the basic roles dictated by the four cultural themes: *small men*, *run people*, *Earth people* and people of a *tribal God*. Now this is changing. Now the educated elites too have access to high office. Without passing through Dagomba ethnicity, they too are becoming *big men*. The once clear differences between *hit* and *run*, entitled and disenfranchised, are now full of ambiguities. Now educated Konkomba are becoming aware of their *democratic rights* which are announced in the Constitutions but have not been fully integrated into social structures. They are starting to realise that they have more options than before – that they need not suffer provocation meekly or *run away* or even go to war, and that they can respond in accordance with the law.

Now they can opt for their own ethnic identity. Their low self-esteem has been raised. They are not just a nameless people at the lower rungs of Dagomba society. They have their own *Konkomba* language and identity. They are proud to be Konkomba. They say: *Even God speaks our language in the Bible!* Now, through Christianity, Konkomba are experiencing what it is to be *God-people* too, with all that this implies for freedom of movement, of choice, expression, and the freedom to change or to master their own fate. Now they do not have to become Dagomba in order to attain to these freedoms. Now, too, they can begin to form their own kind of chieftaincy. They can choose to live in a *peace culture* instead of a *war culture*.

New Alliances for Peace

Diverse roles make for diverse identities. They make it possible for both groups to form new alliances, new identities and sub-identities, which cross-pollinate and freely criss-cross ethnic barriers. The educated elites of both groups identify with each other, interact with each other and move together freely. Non-chiefly Muslims identify with chiefly Muslims. The Muslims who have a Christian school background are responsive to Christians. Elite Muslims easily form alliances with elite Christians, and vice versa. Creating such interconnecting networks is crucial for preventing polarization, for reducing the tensions between ethnic groups and for building a balanced new world that is no longer focused on the conflicting pathways of opposing ethnic groups. All of these multiple new connections for building a new *peace culture* have already been formed. They are new shoots waiting to be nurtured.

As chiefly and non-chiefly peoples begin working together under the influence of these mixed pathways, they can learn to form a synthesis consisting of new, less conflicted, hybrid pathways. In the hit-man vs. run-man theme the Dagomba can learn about their own sub-identities from the Konkomba. They can learn to be more sensitive to the freedoms and constraints of the Konkomba, and Konkomba can learn to be less sensitive to the constraints on their freedoms. For a positive synergy to be activated in the big-man vs. small-man theme, like two dancing partners creating a work of art, it will require the balanced and harmonious interaction of both roles. The people of the land need to go back to the Earth, to be curators of the land, not despoilers; and the people of the Earth need to learn to enter the modern world, to take charge of their identity and destiny. Both groups need to work together for their mutual development. Both the spiritual and material economies need to be blended.

LIBERATION AND NEGATIVE SYNERGIES

Cultural Themes and Liberation

On a more general note, many of the processes that have been discussed above in terms of the four cultural themes resonate with the liberation themes of the peace movement, especially from the field of women's liberation (see Baker Miller 1983). These liberation themes are now being applied throughout the Fourth World.

Augsburger (1992) outlines seven basic liberation themes relating to systemic injustices that are being applied to cross-cultural, dominant-submissive relations among peoples throughout the Fourth World. All of them can be found in the dynamics of the cultural themes presented above. These liberating themes can act as guideposts in the resolution process. I paraphrase them here:

1. New consciousness

The discovery of a new identity encourages resistance against the dominant culture and against any discrimination favouring the dominant group. We have seen how the discovery of their new ethnic identity has empowered non-chiefly peoples to resist the chiefly groups and establish their own independent chieftaincies.

2. New accountability

The tendency of the dominant group to accept privileges or to actively impose injustice, violence and exploitation is being voiced and challenged. Formerly the privileges of the chiefly groups went unchallenged but that time has passed.

3. Rejecting violence

The past willingness of the submissive culture to be intimidated, to cover for violent abuse, to tolerate harassment, and to accept equal justice concerning civil and human rights is now confronted pro-actively without violence. The hit-man vs. run-man theme is being seriously questioned and non-violent means of addressing this issue are being considered.

4. Equal opportunity

Political, economic, religious, and educational opportunities can no longer be retained by the dominant group without challenge. The non-chiefly peoples are actively challenging the dominant chiefly groups for their equal rights and opportunities, especially to access health and educational services.

5. Progress

Although the degree of change on the above issues varies from culture to culture, and although movement in many settings is only beginning, the evidences of progress are visible and undeniable. Development is the key to peace and unity. Everyone in Northern Ghana cites development as the most important force for change and for an ongoing peace.

6. Triumph

There is a celebration of battles won, of hope for an equality that exists now in dreams and aspirations, and of the confidence that a just society is and will be emerging. With every tribal war the non-chiefly groups have become more organised and conscientized. Now the war mentality has taken a different turn. There is more pro-active negotiation and much more political activism. The non-chiefly groups are now showing their strength in their vote rather than in arms.

7. Solidarity

The capacity for networking with other oppressed or sympathetic groups within and across cultures, and the priority given to the relationships and human connectedness, makes solidarity with others, in both the struggle and the celebration, a natural theme for the solidarity of oppressed minorities. Konkomba are calling for ethnic solidarity in their vote and for solidarity on issues that affect them. All the non-chiefly peoples are calling for greater solidarity among themselves to have their voices heard. Other groups too, for example the Commoners among some of the chiefly groups, are also joining ranks to show solidarity in their difficulties.

Resolving Cultural Themes

In all of the cultural themes we have seen that there is a two-fold movement. The polarities are at the same time complementarities. This harkens back to the pre-colonial symbiosis that we spoke of in the Introduction. The tensions and imbalances in these four cultural themes need to be resolved through the enactment of roles, especially reverse roles, in the context of a culture-drama workshop. It is precisely because of the complementarities that the reverse roles are so important.

In the following section we describe the way the culture-drama workshop actually functions. It makes use of reverse role-enactments to help expose underlying pathways. It makes them explicit, and it helps participants to see the negative forces that are at work in their daily interactions. In the workshop format participants discuss, recognise, accept, and eventually take charge of their own cultural pathways. They try to integrate these pathways internally. Each group tries to discern what kinds of changes or responses are needed in order to move toward a new integration of their culture. Finally, in the work of synthesis, the two groups are guided in choosing what things need to be changed as they move toward a new peace vision, a new set of interlinked pathways that are a peace culture. As we move along, we will

give examples from the Nsawam workshop and we will keep before us the seven indicators of liberation mentioned above.

PART III: THE WORKSHOP

THE CULTURE-DRAMA WORKSHOP

The Aims of the Culture-drama Workshop

The culture-drama workshop differs considerably from most of the current peacebuilding workshops. It is not didactic. It does not teach a method for helping to keep the peace. It doesn't aim at passing on information about peace, or even about the peacebuilding process. It is not meant for training, as such, although it can be adapted for this use. It is for cross-cultural discovery and 'conversion'. It is therapeutic; it initiates and fosters a process of cross-cultural healing and integration. It is more than just a formula for peacebuilding; it actively builds a 'peace culture'.

The aims of the culture-drama workshop are (1) to expose the deeper systemic issues and cultural pathways that continually bring groups into conflict, (2) to lead participants to some degree of recognition and acceptance of these and (3) to create an enactment environment in which they can begin to integrate their pathways internally and externally, form new unities and build a 'peace culture'.

The basic 'movement' or process of facilitation is: discussion, enactment, followed by reflection and analysis, followed, in turn, by more focused enactment, reflection and analysis. The object of the exercise is to lead the group to experience first-hand, through enactment, the culture-based systemic friction and miscommunication in their engagements, and through reflection, analysis and more enactment, help them to change these systems.

Through cross-cultural enactments, or role-plays, participants are led to a deep encounter with the other culture and at the same time their own culture. This leads to a 'cross-cultural conversion'. This conversion, in turn, leads to cultural transformation and a common 'peace culture' joining the two groups.

THE HISTORY OF CULTURE-DRAMA

Where did the Idea of Culture-drama Originate?

The origins of culture-drama go back to therapy sessions with Catholic Religious communities in Ghana in 1989. At this time, the number of indigenous vocations to Religious Orders had increased to the point that many of the communities were half Ghanaian and the rest expatriates. Conflicts began to arise in communities between the Ghanaians and the expatriates. Ghanaians complained that the expatriates 'hated' them or even that they hated all Ghanaians. The expatriates, on the other hand, accused the Ghanaian Religious of breaking the rule or Religious Constitutions and of being 'bad' community members.

The Birth of a New Form

A psycho-dramatist Dr. Gong, Shu, who worked at the ðHouse of Affirmation, An International Therapeutic Center for Religiousö in St. Louis, was invited to Ghana to try to resolve the conflicts. Being a bi-cultural Chinese-American, she immediately realised that the deeper issues were cultural. By chance she connected up with the author and we began to work as a team on this project. She led the groups through the issues from a psycho-dramatist's perspective and I made the adjustments and dramatic translations to the local cultural contexts. Soon we began to deviate from the conventions of modern psychodrama. Something new was beginning to form.

Plate 9. Author and Dr. Gong with notes during an enactment

Brief Development of the Form

By and large, the experiment with Religious communities in Ghana was a success. Dr. Gong, as a follower of Moreno's school of ðSociometryö, was already experimenting with such mixed disciplines, and my knowledge of the local cultures and cultural-analysis found a practical application in the enactment therapy. We were both very excited about the prospects of developing a new discipline and, while I was on sabbatical at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, in 1992-3, I worked out the basic aims and methods of the new form in a very general way. During this time we also offered some presentations⁴⁸ of the new form. Some of the material was written up (see Gong, Shu and J. P. Kirby 1992) but unfortunately, nothing was ever published. As a result, the form was never introduced to the public or professional worlds.

Plate 10. Dr. Gong, Shu on break with participants

The Project is Shelved

The culture-drama concept was new and highly interdisciplinary. Getting it accepted professionally meant putting in a lot of extra time and work, which neither of us had. Following my sabbatical, my own work and Dr. Gong's took different tracks. I returned to my commitments in Ghana running the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies, and this kept me fully occupied. Neither of us were able to get funding to do more workshops, so the project remained on the shelf for ten years until my next sabbatical in 2001, when I conducted research on culture and peacebuilding in West Africa. The final products of the project were the Nsawam workshop and this workbook.

Plate 11. Facilitator Renee diagramming an analysis

THE NSAWAM WORKSHOP

⁴⁸ In 1992 we presented two culture-drama enactmentsö one about ðbush burningö and the other about women's empowerment in Africa, entitled: ðSociometry in a Changing Cultural Contextö at the 50th Anniversary Conference of the American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama (ASGPP) in New York. In 1993, we demonstrated its effectiveness in helping to resolve cultural conflicts in Religious Orders at a Faculty Seminar at Catholic Theological Union, in Chicago.

Background to the Nsawam Workshop

I wanted to round the research off with a culture-drama workshop in order to test the themes which the research produced and to test the usefulness of this new type of dramatic enactment. The most challenging type of test case would be one in which the peacebuilding process has remained stuck, unable to move on to the systemic levels. The Konkomba-Dagomba case therefore seemed both ideal and very challenging.

We chose the Catholic Conference Centre at Nsawam near Accra as the workshop venue both because of its resources and the fact that it is secluded and far from the North. My co-facilitators included our linguist at TICCS, Edward Salifu Mahama, and the psycho-dramatists Dr. Gong, Shu, from the USA and Taiwan, and Renee Oudijk from the Netherlands. The workshop included a broad range of what Lederach calls 'mid-level'⁴⁹ participants from among two prominent groups in the Northern Conflict – the Dagomba and Konkomba. There was one observer present from CRS. Before going further we need to say a word about the conflict itself.

Why Choose the Dagomba-Konkomba Conflictual Pathways?

We have seen how the so-called Northern Conflict in Ghana demonstrates the presence of conflictual pathways between the Dagomba and Konkomba. Although almost a decade has passed since the 1994 violent outbreak, the peace process is still stuck at the second level. There is enough emotional distance from the event that both sides should be more than ready for dialogue on the systemic issues. Yet there is very little of this. The cultural identities and the cultural issues surrounding the conflict have been well researched (Boi-Nai and Kirby 1998; Froelich 1954; Katanga 1994a, 1994b; Kirby 2001, 1998a, 1998b; Ladouceur 1979; Staniland 1975; Tait 1958, 1961; van der Linde and Naylor 1994). But the research has not generally been used in ways that foster a genuine peace. In some instances the opposite has happened. Conflicting historical, sociological and anthropological interpretations have been seized by each of the conflicting parties to support their opposing claims. National political and economic agendas have also tended to play down the severity of the conflict, at the high cost of preventing deep reconciliation. All of this makes the case of the Dagomba-Konkomba conflictual pathways a very tough one, yet an ideal one for testing the healing merits of cultural-drama.

WORKSHOP TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Borrowings from Psychodrama and Socio-drama

Many of the tools that we used in the culture-drama workshop were influenced by psychodrama and socio-drama. They include scene-setting or developing the scenes to be enacted, and cultural script-writing, warm-ups or various activities to get players out of themselves or de-roling, the use of props such as lighting, scenery, artefacts, masks, clothing, sounds and music, and cultural contexting to get participants into their new roles. Elements borrowed from psychodrama include mirroring or the acting out of one's own culture, doubling or expressing the role in a way that is culturally correct when the one playing it gets stuck or disconnected, soliloquy which is when the role-enactment focuses on one role rather than on the

⁴⁹ For an explanation of what is meant by 'mid-level' see Part IV below.

dialogue, and role-reversals in which participants take on the cultural roles of the other culture. All of these are very important ways of bringing hidden cultural pathways to light, to deeper reflection, and to acceptance.

Sociometric Mapping

Some of the techniques, especially those related to warm-ups, are derived from sociometry and art therapy. For example, when participants start out, all are strangers to each other and are only known to the facilitators who chose them. Therefore, a "social mapping" of the group needs to be done in order to anticipate and make use of these dynamics. One way to test the socio-cultural proximity of the group, and the positive and negative flows of energy within the group, is borrowed from art therapy. It is to have the participants make drawings on a blank bed sheet, which is placed in the middle of the room.

At Nsawam we told the participants to imagine that they were shipwrecked on a desert island and then we had them draw their feelings and concerns on the bed sheet. The sheet served as the "island." We anticipated that the drawings would reveal much about the dynamics of the group and that this could be used to elicit further information. This turned out as we had expected. All the drawings were along the edges of the sheet. Almost all the drawings were about self-preservation or rescue plans, although some were also about group functions, social institutions and development. But perhaps more important than what was there on the sheet was what was missing. We were struck by the fact that there were no culture-based observations or issues. These were implicit, hidden from view.

Desert Island Drawings

After they make their drawings, the facilitators can ask the following questions:

- Where do you see yourself in relation to the group or in relation to the centre of the sheet?
- Why did you choose that particular place to put your drawing and not another place?
- How do you feel about the drawing?
- How would you feel if it were in another place on the sheet?

The facilitator may select one of the participants for detailed questioning:

- Come and stand in the centre (to a person whose drawing is on the edge).
- How do you feel?
- Who is around you on the sheet?
- Where would you prefer to be on the sheet?
- Look at the group. Do you wish to say something to somebody?
- Would you rather be sitting in different seat? Feel free to move there.
- How do you feel now (after moving)?
- How do you see yourself in the group?

After the participants are sufficiently "warmed up" with this art therapy technique they can begin to set the scene and move into enactment.

A similar set of activities and questions can also be arranged for the end of the workshop. From this the participants are able to see how much they have changed as individuals, as an ethnic group and in relation to the other group. At the Nsawam workshop the final drawings were much less focused on the individual. The differences in ethnicity were clearly present, but in terms of mutual sharing rather than in ways that bring conflict. Similarities and common needs were emphasised. Communal resources like schools, markets and farmland were shared and provisions were made for each of the cultural systems to work together.

Plate 12. Drawing on the 'desert island'

THE POWER OF ROLE-ENACTMENT

Role-enactment as a Holistic Experience

Role-enactment is very powerful. The power comes from two sources. The first is in the fact that enactment is holistic and organic. Actors bring to the scene their whole being: their physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, social and cultural presence. In reverse roles the 'wholeness' reverses. When the participants take up reverse roles they identify as deeply as possible with the opposing culture. They take on their characteristics, their likes and dislikes, their secrets, their power, their weaknesses, their failures and successes in real life-like contexts.

Role-enactment as an Ontological Experience

The second is in the fact that enactment is an ontological experience. Actors in reverse-roles experience a different way of being; a new reality is breached. Players experience the 'truth' of another culture. They begin to value the culture for itself. The other culture suddenly becomes its own rationale for being, its own criterion for 'rightness', its own basis for 'value', and its own logic for 'truth'. In short, they become cross-cultural 'insiders' or bi-cultural persons, insiders to both cultures.

Plate 13. Drawings at the end of the workshop

Role-enactment Means Becoming an 'Insider'

Becoming an 'insider' in another culture means taking on their identities from within or appropriating the norms, values, perspectives, expectations and behavioural patterns of the other culture. In short, one assumes the cultural pathways of the other. When the pathways of the other culture have been assumed, the experience brings with it a holistic empathy – one actually experiences the pain, the joy, the hopes, the fears of the other culture at the same time that one experiences the ontological 'reality' and 'truth' of the other culture. This leads to a more complete unblocking, or a breaking free from one's culture-bound roles. It leads to experiencing the other culture as victim and not just perpetrator, as 'good' and not just 'evil', as 'logical and predictable' not just erratic and inscrutable. It leads to greater unity and finally to synthesis. Only this kind of insider's experience can relax the grip of our ethnocentrism, or the myths and core values of our first culture.

Differences between Enactments and Reverse Enactments

Straightforward enactment of their own cultural roles helps participants to visualise the scene and grapple with the roles in question. It can be a good warm-up format or it can be used to pinpoint steps in a cultural ðaction chainð. By acting out roles specific to their own culture within highly contextualised situations, participants can be helped to isolate, recognise and reflect upon the implicit steps that are involved in the shared cultural contexts. The problem with such straightforward enactments is that the cultural differences tend to get buried in the action.

Role-reversals are much more powerful. They offer a new perception of one's own cultureð seen through the outsider's lenses. They afford a new understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of one's own cultural pathways as they interact with those of others. New clarity is shone on one's own symbolic systems and the meanings. It brings about a greater discernment between what is indispensable within one's culture and what is useless, imbalanced, or neurotic. There is a newfound ability to accept one's culture with all its blemishes. Finally, there is a greater decisiveness and ability to discard the inappropriate patterns in one's own culture and to bring one's own values and ideals more in line with one's own behaviour and expectations or vice-versa.

THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURE-DRAMA**The Dynamics of Role-enactments**

Role-enactments focus on cultural similarities, while reverse role-enactments bring out cultural differences. Both processes force our illusive cultural pathways to the surface as the two paths coincide or collide in a given shared cultural context. In both forms of role-enactment the focus is on experience and action. This frees up those who are locked into their culture-bound roles and it reduces the defensive posture. It leads to new openness and redirects the freed energies to creative exploration and discovery.

Cross-cultural Conversion

In the process of the enactments two sets of hidden values, expectations and behavioural patterns become apparent. As they do so, the ways in which they converge and diverge can be more closely examined, reflected upon and owned. Through the reverse enactments, each side suddenly becomes aware of the differences, especially at the level of meaning, that exist between their own culture and the opposing culture. This awareness and its acceptance is what I call ðcross-cultural conversionð. Quite remarkably, the deeper the ðconversionð to the other reality the more we are able to recognise and accept our own illusive pathways. Recognition and acceptance are important because only after a people begin to ðownð the conflictual roots of their convergent and divergent pathways can they begin to change them.

Exposing Stereotypes

Reverse role-enactments also bring to light our stereotypes about the roles of the opposite culture. They deepen awareness of the differences between the two pathways, where they coincide and diverge, and they make explicit all the steps involved. The technique of ðdoublingð is very important in bringing stereotypes to

light and overcoming them through enactment. At the Nsawam workshop, for example, a Konkomba was helped to identify and appropriate a more Dagomba-like role, complete with its insider meanings, when a 'double' came up beside him, spoke the words and acted out the scene as only a true Dagomba could do in that situation. Similarly, a Dagomba, playing the part of the Konkomba in one of the scenes, identified and appropriated a more 'Konkomba-like' way of thinking and acting in that situation when 'helped' by a Konkomba 'double'. For an example of this, see Plate 27, which pictures a Konkomba in the foreground 'doubling' in an enactment in order to demonstrate to Dagombas the correct greeting procedure at an Earth shrine.

The Role of the Double

The process involves persons from either side first making their own cultural 'mistakes' or experiencing the anomaly of their unfulfilled expectations in their role, and then being shown the 'culturally appropriate' way to enact the role, thereby directly experiencing its contextual relevance and meaning. In the case of the Konkomba attempting to take on the role of a Dagomba chief, it became very obvious to all that his own value system placed personal and group independence higher than the interdependencies involved in chieftaincy. The final acceptance is not through discussion but in the enactment itself – taking on the newly 'corrected' role and letting it become a part of him or her, as it were. In this way the hidden pathways and inner meanings are revealed, learned and appropriated by each side through action.

The 'Conversion' is in the Action

This does not discount the importance of preparation before the enactment, nor of reflection after it; it only emphasizes that the 'conversion' takes place in the act. Obviously, then, the preparation for taking on the role becomes extremely important. In fact, we could say that the better and more intense the preparation, the more obvious the mistakes, the more stereotyped behaviour and anomalies there will be, and thus the greater the potential for learning, and for 'conversion'.

A Co-creative Process

There is also a special mutual dynamic occurring between the two sets of reverse role-players. It stems from the fact that the cultural themes themselves are both conflictual and complementary. The interaction of the participants viewing (and acting) their own cultural patterns being played out by the opposing side is mutually encouraging and freeing. As they guide and mentor each other by 'doubling' they begin to feel that their efforts to portray their position more accurately are not only listened to, they are gratefully accepted. They both feel part of a creative process making something entirely new, a combination of the best parts of both cultures. This is the creation of the synthesis at work in action.

Plate 14. Buying grain in a market scene

Plate 15. Chief's court scene

Mutual Affirmation and Empowerment

In reverse enactments participants experience a high level of mutual cooperation and co-creativity. As 'guests' in the other culture they become more affectively disposed to it. But, above all, they become vulnerable and need help. The vulnerability elicits

the help they need in the other. They are mutually affirmed and affirming in the other cultural identity. At the same time, they feel both empowered and affirmed in their own cultural identities. Finally, and most importantly for the cultural synthesis, reverse role-enactments develop in both sets of players an ontological sense⁵⁰ of the rightness or appropriateness of the other cultural patterns, a kindred spirit, a feeling of unity and mutual support.

Mutual Understanding of and Appreciation for Conflictual Situations

Enactment also draws attention to the importance of the situations themselves. Certain situations of themselves actively bring about or create a negative synergy because of the interaction of the two pathways. In the course of an enactment it becomes hard to deny that certain shared situations are highly volatile and that they really do foster the conflictive cultural themes. These contexts in particular need to be integrated and transformed. For example, the Konkombas and Dagombas experience this sort of negative synergy in such shared contexts as markets attended by both groups and at the chief's hall or court. Both of these became important scenes for enactment.

THE CULTURE-DRAMA PROCESS

The Five Stages of Cross-cultural Synthesis

The terms, processes and working concepts in culture-drama have all been influenced by psychodrama. The three basic movements of 'warm-up', 'action' and 'sharing' come from psychodrama, and our term 'sub-identities' has been influenced by Vargiu's term 'subpersonalities' (1977). The process of 'psychosynthesis', which uses symbols for 'self-development' and 'self-realisation' (see Vargiu 1977), has five stages.⁵¹ In culture-drama the steps are slightly different but the overall movement toward cross-cultural synthesis runs parallel to that leading to self-realisation in psychosynthesis. These steps are (1) Recognition, (2) Acceptance, (3) Coordination, (4) Cultural integration and (5) Cross-cultural synthesis. They are described in more detail below.

1. RECOGNITION

In culture-drama, enactment and reverse enactment lead directly to awareness of the cultural pathways. It makes the implicit explicit. Taking on the cultural pathway of the other group, through reverse enactment, is the best way to do this, but it can also be fostered by enacting one's own cultural roles. The principle of enactment is based on the fact that we are culture-bound creatures. Culture controls us and limits the

⁵⁰ There is a good example of this 'ontological' experience in a role-enactment game, which we use for cross-cultural training at TICCS. Two groups are each taught their new language and 'culture' and subsequently asked to 'play out' their culture and interact. During the evaluation at the end they are asked to assess the pros and cons of each of the 'make-believe' cultures. Then they are asked to 'cross the floor' to join the other culture if they like that one better. I am always amazed that so few ever cross over. Even women playing in the 'male chauvinist' culture refuse to cross. If the power of ethnocentrism is so strong when playing a game, how much the stronger in real life.

⁵¹ James G. Vargiu, specifies the five stages as 1. Recognition, 2. Acceptance, 3. Coordination, 4. Integration, 5. Synthesis, in his work, *Synthesis, a psychosynthesis workbook, Volume I*, pp 52-90.

vastness of reality to a limited number of important meaning-laden symbols. It, therefore, creates a symbolic reality that is designed for giving and receiving meanings. The key to interpretation and understanding is in holistic cultural enactment, not in mere discussion. Therefore, the key to true and full dialogue with other cultures is enactment, especially reverse enactment.

Learning to Leave

Enactment begins with preparation, with de-roling, with an emptying of one's cultural self. It begins with what linguist Don Larson (1997) calls "Learning to Leave" and what we at TICCS call "exit learning". Various techniques can be used to get participants into the mode (a "right brain" perceptual mode) for cross-cultural learning or for deep perceptual learning unencumbered by culture. These draw attention to the controls that our culture has over us. For example, letting participants think of an animal and then having them make noises and behave like that animal can help free them from the tyranny of their cultural roles. Such "warm-up" enactments also draw our attention to the arbitrary cultural bias that one thing is considered "silly" or "childish", while another thing is not.

One of the warm-ups we used at Nsawam was to re-enact an actual event that happened to one of the participants on the journey down from the North. His bus broke down and he was stranded with the other passengers for 5 or 6 hours on the road. Such an incident creates what anthropologist, Victor Turner, calls a "liminal" state. During such crises our normal cultural bindings break away leaving us to interact in the "raw" as it were, without culture. We end up behaving and talking in a freer way, in ways that we would never have been able to behave in a "normal" state.

Leaving to Learn

Next comes the "en-rolment" or taking on the other cultural reality, complete with its verbal and non-verbal communication including smells, tastes, noises, signs and symbols, colours, art and touch. This is what Larson (1997) calls "Leaving to Learn" and what we call "entry learning". Here one is led to "put on" the new culture gradually, in stages. Finally, one is enabled to take on all the holistic roundness, and "rightness" of the new culture as it begins to offer its own rationale for meaning and existence. Gradually it becomes the ultimate authority on what is right and wrong, good and beautiful. The new culture becomes "good" and "right" and thus all things become "good" and "right" according to whether or not they are "good" and "right" for the culture. Participants taking on the roles of the opposite culture actually become cultural "insiders". When they take on those roles, suddenly what was "bad" or "wrong" before becomes "good" and "right". Thus they "learn" about the other culture in a holistic sense, from the inside, unencumbered by their stereotypes and prejudices.

Awareness

This brings with it the "insight" of cultural awareness. The act of taking on the roles of the opposite culture, or even taking on one's own roles in a more focused way in a given context, results in a greater awareness of our own culture, the culture that holds us, and the ways in which it controls us. The awareness points in two directions: inwardly towards oneself, one's own culture, and outwardly towards the other culture. But both are simultaneous. In the instant the "other" is known, the self is also apprehended. As the anthropologist, Edward Hall (1966) says, we become aware of our cultural reality through the anomaly of our unfulfilled expectations. They become

unfulfilled precisely when they bump up against those of another culture whose expectations are unlike our own. We cannot really know our own culture unless it is bounced off the culture of another. In the bouncing process we suddenly become aware that what we expected did not occur, and from that we can begin to infer the existence of culture, and our cultural differences. When our expectations are not fulfilled they draw our attention to them. We have to say, "What were our expectations anyway?" We suddenly become aware that they are there, that there is structure and meaning to them, and that they are not the same as the expectations or structured meanings that others have.

2. ACCEPTANCE

Merely naming and viewing our own pathways from "outside ourselves" does not always lead to immediate recognition or acceptance. More often than not there is some level of non-recognition and denial to be dealt with. This is particularly true if there is great dissonance or incoherence between the values or norms of a culture and the observed expectations and behavioural patterns of the people. There may also be a number of opposing cultural sub-identities associated with these patterns. If confronted on the issue in discussion, participants may take refuge in explanations such as: "We are really not like that." "Everyone does that, not just us." "It is only natural." "If the roles were reversed they would do the same thing." The best way to reduce denial and precipitate acceptance is through reverse enactment. Usually participants are only convinced of the dissonance when they are "caught in the act" or "in the role", as it were. The greater the denial, the more enactment will be required.

Overcoming Denial

The facilitators can help participants overcome denial by letting them test the opposite sub-identity in enactment. Facilitators can demonstrate to participants through "focused enactments" that it is "ok to be like that." "Agitation is good." "Flight is also good." There are times to be "pushy" and times to "back off." Agitation helps us to understand and protect our cultural boundaries. If all aggression were disallowed then everyone would eventually be "pushed against the wall."

Participants, belonging to a culture that is more prone toward aggression, who are in strong denial, might be asked to take on the opposite role in order to experience what is bad about "flight." In one of the Nsawam "focused enactments" a Dagomba participant in denial was actually pushed against the wall by the facilitator. In such a case the whole group should be involved, offering its support. Once acceptance is achieved, the two culture groups begin the process of coordination and integration.

3. COORDINATION

As greater recognition descends and denial is gradually loosened, participants can begin to accept and change their cultural pathways, and the cultural synthesis process can begin. The overall objective of cultural synthesis, or bringing two cultures into harmonious interaction, can only succeed to the extent that the two cultures are themselves healthy. This process is always blocked, to some extent, by the lack of integration within the cultures. Every culture manifests some degree of neurosis or lack of harmony between its various "sub-identities" and dissonance between ideals

and behaviour. Cultural integration aims at bringing together the estranged cultural sub-identities and thereby changing the cultural self-perception or identity.

Bringing Sub-identities Together

Gradually sub-identities do change through a process of coordination. The progression is in three phases: recognising the various sub-identity extremes within the culture, holding one extreme in abeyance while testing the other(s), and then comparing and contrasting the extremes. The first phase in coordination is recognising the sub-identities. Each group does this by exploring the anomalies within. Once the extremes are recognised and accepted, they can be tested by holding one in abeyance and acting out the other(s). Finally, they can be coordinated by being compared and contrasted.

How Coordination works in Psychosynthesis

In psychosynthesis a person having an aggressive father and a submissive mother may discover that he or she is too submissive, or too much like the mother. The person may, therefore, wish to balance the mother's submissiveness with the father's aggressiveness. One way to do this is to foster coordination between the two personalities. The person might purposely act out the father's personality in certain situations for one hour a day for one week. Then the person might increase it to two hours a day, and so on, while reducing the hours acting like the mother. Gradually the person will be able to bring the two personalities together, harmonizing or coordinating them into a new identity, and in this way manage the growth of his or her own personality.

Recognising and accepting the Sub-identities

The basic tool for testing the sub-identities is the focused enactment. The participant who was pushed against the wall, in the focused enactment described above, needed to recognise and accept two conflicting extreme cultural sub-identities within himself and his culture, the hitter and the runner, and allow them to interact or to coordinate with each other. The participant, who was from the dominant culture, felt most uncomfortable being put in the runner role and being pushed against the wall. Yet the enactment helped him to accept the runner identity within. The same would have to be done with the hitter identity. Despite the fact that he was by far the most aggressive participant in the workshop and that this was clearly seen by all the participants, he aggressively denied it. He would have to work through this denial by enactment.

Testing the Sub-identities through 'Focused Enactments'

Values and ideals may be at one extreme with culturally conditioned expectations and habitual behaviour at the other. Perhaps it is their extremely high idealism and the value that the Dagomba place on peace and harmony, particularly in the family, that kept this person (and the Dagomba in general) in denial on this issue. The next step, then, might be to have another focused enactment in which the person is cast as the hitter or pusher, and pushes the facilitator against the wall. In any case, by temporarily reducing the urgency of one extreme (such as the value placed on harmony) and testing the fit of the other extreme (the hitter), the participant could be helped to creatively explore, compare and coordinate the various conflicting identities that are available within his or her culture.

‘Focused Enactments’ are for the Group, not the Individual

It must be stressed that even though the ‘focused enactments’ make use of individuals within the group who exhibit one or the other of the extremes, the enactments still involve the whole group and have an effect on the whole group. In the above example, the act of pushing the participant against the wall actually brought the other participants of that culture to greater awareness, and in this way it brought the two groups closer together. From that point onwards, on several occasions, the other participants of his ethnic group took him aside to advise him to stop being so aggressive.

Bridging the Identity Gaps

After ‘testing’ one extreme, the sub-identity, which was held in abeyance, can come back into play. With frequent rehearsal, or by enacting different scenes with the same theme, the participants will be able to reduce the gap between sub-identities or between the estranged ideals on the one hand and the actual expectations and behaviour on the other. Then, gradually they will be empowered to modify their behavioural patterns along the lines of the new ‘integrated’ identity.

4. CULTURAL INTEGRATION

Gradually, through enactment, an internal blending, a balancing of opposites, a new integration begins to occur within each culture. The internal dissonance is reduced, recognition descends, and participants begin to mould new, more consequent, pathways. Gradually a new internal harmony is achieved and denial fades to nothing. A new cultural self-understanding emerges along with a solid acceptance of and pride in one’s healthier identity and behaviour. Participants are now ready to engage in a more productive dialogue with other cultures.

Learning from Each Other

At the level of coordination, each of the themes is fully present with all of its contradictions, in each of the ethnic groups. The extremes need both ethnic groups to demonstrate their own opposing cultural pathways as models for the opposing sub-identities. For example, the participants from the ‘hit-man’ culture can compare their own characteristics with those of the ‘run-man’ culture, and vice-versa, through enactment. Each group is able to integrate its own internal conflicting pathways through the clear models offered by the other culture. Each can learn about itself through the other. Each can learn how to put less emphasis on their stronger sub-identity and put more emphasis on their weaker sub-identity. At the Nsawam workshop, whether by discussion or enactment, a number of conflicting sub-identities arose with regard to each of the four themes. The coordination of these sub-identities suggests ways that each side could learn from the other about their weaker side. I have listed many of these as follows:

Coordinating Sub-identities in the ‘Hit-man’ vs. ‘Run-man’ Theme

Chiefly can learn from non-chiefly how to be:

- Less the ‘hit-man’ more the ‘run-man’ more strategies of avoidance
- Less assertive, more accommodating

- Less restrictive of others' freedoms, more respectful of others' freedoms
- Less agitating, more patient
- Less acquisitive, more generous
- Less confrontational, more dialogical
- Less hierarchical, more egalitarian
- Less focused on the self, more focused on the other
- Less assertive of their own needs, more affirming of others' needs
- Less focused on achieved status, more focused on ascribed status
- Less assimilative, more respectful of others' ethnicities
- Less outward-looking, more inward-looking
- Less indifferent to others' needs, more sensitive to others' needs

Non-chiefly can learn from chiefly how to be:

- More the 'hit-man' less the 'run-man'
- More pro-active, less controlled by strategies of avoidance
- More aware of their own needs, less absorbed with others' needs
- More assertive, less subservient
- More concerned with their own identity, less with others' identity
- More forceful in discussion, less forceful in war
- More structured and hierarchical, less egalitarian
- More outward-looking, less inward-looking
- More confident, less insecure
- More focused on achieved status, less focused on ascribed status
- More able to interact with others, less reclusive

Coordinating Sub-identities in the 'Big-man' vs. 'Small-man' Theme:

Chiefly can learn from non-chiefly how to be:

- Less the chiefly authoritarian, more egalitarian
- Less power-oriented, more service-oriented
- Less oriented toward achieved status, more toward ascribed status
- Less vertically structured, more horizontally structured
- Less incorporative, more pluralistic
- Less focused on their own identity, more focused on others' identities
- Less controlling, more laissez-faire

Non-chiefly can learn from chiefly how to be:

- More chiefly, less egalitarian
- More oriented toward achieved status, less toward ascribed status
- More vertically structured, less horizontally structured
- More trustful of their own identity, less tied to others' identities

- More power-expressive, less laissez-faire

Coordinating Sub-identities in the ‘Land-people’ vs. ‘Earth-people’ Theme

Chiefly can learn from non-chiefly how to be:

- Less the ‘land people’ more the ‘Earth people’
- Less oriented toward the material economy, more toward the spirit world
- Less custodians of land, more custodians of the Earth
- Less utilitarian with regard to the land, more nurturing of the Earth
- Less individually opportunistic, more socially responsible
- Less exploitive of the environment, more ecological
- Less the ‘owner of the land’ more the caretaker of the Earth

Non-chiefly can learn from chiefly how to be:

- More the ‘land people’ less the ‘Earth people’
- More oriented toward the material economy, less toward the spirit world
- More custodians of land, less custodians of the Earth
- More practical and scientific, less reliance on the spirit world
- More individualistic, less socially circumscribed
- More scientific, less magical
- More the ‘owner of the land’ less the ‘master of the Earth’

Coordinating Sub-identities in the ‘God-people’ vs. ‘Earth-people’ Theme:

Chiefly can learn from non-chiefly how to be:

- Less the ‘people of the Sky’ more the ‘people of the Earth’
- Less absorbed in a universal God, more attention to a tribal God
- Less of the ‘religions of the book’ more of the ‘religions of nature’
- Less focused on values, more on behaviour
- Less secular minded, more religious minded
- Less focused on an otherworldly morality, more on a this-worldly morality
- Less focused on the new, more focused on tradition
- Less focused on the visible world, more focused on the unseen world
- Less focused on divinity, more focused on humanity
- Less focused on the general, more on the particular
- Less focused on limitless choice, more on destiny
- Less focused on linear history, more on cyclic history
- Less future oriented, more past and present oriented
- Less focused on progress, more on the status quo

Non-chiefly can learn from chiefly how to be:

- More ‘the people of the Sky’ less ‘the people of the Earth’

- More adherence to the idea of universal God, less to tribal God
- More of the 'religions of the book', less of the 'religions of nature'
- More focused on values, less on behaviour
- More secular minded, less religious minded
- More focused on an otherworldly morality, less on a this-worldly morality
- More focused on a global religiosity, less on an African religiosity
- More focused on the new, less focused on tradition
- More focused on the visible world, less focused on the unseen world
- More focused on divinity, less focused on humanity
- More focused on the general, less focused on the particular
- More focused on free choice, less focused on destiny
- More focused on a linear history, less on a cyclic history
- More future oriented, less past oriented
- More focused on progress, less focused on the status quo

5. CROSS-CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

The cross-cultural synthesis is concerned with the coordinated production of the new 'peace culture'. It entails a convergence of the two cultural pathways. This does not mean the assimilation of one culture by the other, but rather the mutual 'conversion' of both cultures, and both cultures forming a new cultural synthesis. Therefore, it calls each culture to reform itself in order to harmonize with the other. This leads to harmonious complementarities rather than sameness. Here we find unity in wondrous diversity. Here cultural differences gradually cease to be a threat but become a source of awe and discovery, leading to greater knowledge, enlightenment and mutual well being. Here we reach the final objective of the culture-drama process: achieving a 'peace culture' instead of 'war culture'.

Creating a 'Peace Culture'

Culture-drama brings these two pathways together quite naturally. A 'peace culture' can never be achieved through discussions and negotiations alone, for the very act of speaking (using one's own language and cultural perspective) exercises one's own culture. Language is an expression of culture and therefore 'discussion' (especially when it involves two different languages and cultures) always keeps cultural roles separate and distinct. Even when the words are dialogical, discussions focus alternately on one side or the other. They do not bring the sides together. Discussion tends to fix cultural boundaries and to promote isolation. If cultural identities continue to be formed in the absence of a more holistic or experiential dialogue they become more neurotic and closed. And cultural isolation always brings stagnation and greater cultural neurosis.

The sum of it is that cultures need other cultures to stay healthy. Through good facilitation, participants can be empowered in their roles and enactments to arrive at the creative license 'to make things work'. In their reverse roles, speaking the language of the other culture, participants will almost automatically begin to adjust their role-behaviour to reduce the distance and increase the convergence between the

cultures. As they do so they begin to create new identities for both cultures and a new cultural ground between them. They begin the systemic re-ordering of their shared socio-cultural contexts through enactment. In other words, they begin to dramatize a 'peace culture'. Indeed, the 'final act' in a culture-drama workshop is the enactment of such a 'peace culture'.

A Cyclic Progression

We have distinguished between 'cultural integration' and 'cultural synthesis' in order to draw attention to the fact that the process is twofold. The integration must be interior as well as exterior, within the culture itself and with the other culture. Although there is a logical priority of 'cultural integration' occurring before 'cultural synthesis', in actuality they both occur simultaneously and are mutually reinforcing. A true 'peace culture' can only be achieved through a joint process of cultural integration and cultural synthesis.

The Holistic Nature of Enactments

In culture-drama the stages of the process do not follow one after another in a linear fashion but rather continue in a progressive cyclic movement. If you roll a soccer ball over a distance of ten yards, the label on the rolling ball will circle around, making a complete circuit about twelve times over that distance. Similarly, it takes many rehearsals at the level of 'cultural integration' to reach a 'cultural synthesis', and many more cycles at the level of awareness and acceptance before there is an integration. While continually repeating and going back to the former stages for verification, testing and rehearsal, the process slowly moves forward toward the peace vision. The holistic nature of enactments also creates a certain unity among all the stages. For example, enactments begin with the aim of creating awareness, but even when focused at that level, in a holistic sense, they begin to anticipate and enhance acceptance, identity-consciousness and integration.

Moving from a Negative to a Positive Synergy through Enactments

The key to progress is in the enactments. At the Nsawam workshop, after doing an enactment, we always discussed it. In the discussions a number of discoveries or recognitions occurred. But we usually found that when we wished to move the group to acceptance of certain recurrent 'cultural themes' or of some specific cultural differences, the level of stress increased. We found that the best way to deal with denial and lead them to deeper acceptance was to re-enter the enactment in a more focused way, with a 'focused enactment'. We found that as soon as they began to act out their differences, the tension gave way to a positive synergy, which reduced denial. It was easier and much more productive to act out the process of acceptance than to talk about it. On the other hand, after they had reached 'acceptance' through enactment, it was quite easy to talk about it.

Achieving the Synthesis

The means for achieving synthesis is through 'cross-cultural conversion'. In terms of the participants' experiences, this manifests itself at four levels: changes in perception, attitudes and vision, and the formation of some new unities.

A Change in Perception

First, there is a change in the participants' perception and understanding of themselves and the other culture. They are much more aware of their own weaknesses and strengths, as well as those of the other culture.

A Change in Attitudes

Secondly, there is an attitude change in the 'culturally converted' participant. There is an increase in their 'cultural pride'. They are confirmed in their own cultural identity and value it more than ever before. At the same time they are much more accepting of their own weaknesses. Similarly they begin to take a certain pride in the other culture together with all its strengths and weaknesses. Their experience of the culture-drama becomes energizing and empowering. Their former spirit of enmity is deflated and their energy is diverted toward a new vision.

Plate 16. Konkombas and Dagombas discussing together

A Change in Vision

Thirdly, 'cross-cultural conversion' leads to a 'peace vision'. Persons with this vision are able to positively affect whomever they meet. Their vision makes 'big problems' look insignificant and 'impossible situations' look only difficult. It gives an inner confidence to the 'converted' and a way of perceiving issues that the others don't have. The vision makes possible a keen discernment of these issues. It enables the converted to instantly judge whether a cultural issue is peripheral to forming the 'peace culture' or indispensable. If peripheral, it can be dispensed with, but if it is central it can be insisted upon with the rigour of righteous objectivity.

Forming New Unities

Fourthly, it leads to the formation of new alliances and unities. It enables those of both sides who have been transformed by the enactment experience to discern the issues complementarily for both sides, so they form alliances of the 'converted' in any negotiation process.

How will the Participants Advance the Peacebuilding Process?

When the participants return home to their town and village communities, they return with a new vision and the hope of the 'culturally converted'. This energizes them to do things they would not have thought possible. It is infectious and irrepressible, so it influences the people back home and gives them renewed hope. When they leave the workshop they not only have new friends and allies from among their former 'enemies', they share a common vision and a new kind of unity: they are a 'brotherhood and sisterhood of the converted'. The practical good sense, the confidence and the objectivity of such an 'alliance of the converted' will gradually attract all but the most rigid radicals in their communities. The experience thus acts as yeast growing in the multicultural community, in all their discussions and their activities, and it will gradually bear fruit in the transformation of the community.

PART IV: HOW TO RUN A WORKSHOP

REMOTE PREPARATION

Putting in place the Main Items

Remote preparation refers to putting in place the main items needed for the workshop before it actually takes place. These include: doing the research, working out the composition of the facilitators, team preparation and coordination, 'cultural script-writing' and the recruitment of participants.

The Research

First of all the research needs to be done, written up and made available. The research data needs to combine the relevant historical, anthropological and sociological material, and it needs to be especially focused on the fields of interaction between the two groups, and not just on the groups themselves. Most importantly, the research should yield the main cultural themes in which the negative synergy takes place. These themes are used to compose the basic 'cultural script' of the drama. Unfortunately, there is very little of such specialised research immediately available with respect to any given conflict and, most of the time, it will entail a specially designated research project.

Plate 17. Team members discussing a scene with a participant

The Facilitator Team

Next is the composition of the facilitator team. This is an extremely important part of the remote preparation. A great deal of care must be taken in choosing the facilitators and in their preparation. There are many more things to consider here than there are for other peacebuilding workshops. Good facilitation of culture-drama needs to combine the professional skills and knowledge of psychodrama, sociometry, anthropology, linguistics, and peacebuilding. In addition to this, at least one of the facilitators must have extensive practical knowledge of the two cultures and be able to speak one or both of the languages of the conflicting groups. Notwithstanding the great wealth of knowledge and skills that are needed, the fewer members there are on the team, the better. A workshop of 20-30 participants should not have more than four facilitators. This is to ensure team unity on the one hand and to maximise opportunities to establish a bonded relationship with the participants on the other.

Plate 18. Team members coordinating a scene

Familiarity with the Research

The team should start preparing for a culture-drama workshop months in advance. The most important part of the team's advance preparation is becoming familiar with the research. Long before the workshop begins, the facilitators must immerse themselves in the data and those who have no direct experience with the cultures need to experientially verify some of the research findings in real life contexts. They must be able to spot the cultural themes when they present themselves in the enactments, and be able to draw them out in discussions and in the analysis.

Team Coordination

The coordination of the team is no less important. Facilitators need to be familiar with each other and work well together. They will continually need to hand off leadership to one another, depending on when one or another of their specialised skills is required. All of this must be determined and well rehearsed beforehand. Specific scenes or parts of the workshop, such as the analysis or discussion, can to some extent be assigned beforehand according to the skills of the team members. But this is not always predictable. Often team members will simply be expected to jump in when they see that the facilitator on the floor is out of his or her depth in a given situation. It can become deadly for the team's (and project's) credibility if the one jumping in knows even less than the one that is replaced; or even worse, if an internal dispute arises. This is where bonding comes to the rescue. Bonded relationships will keep credibility high in spite of a little confusion here and there. But if such a thing should ever happen, the standard response in the African context is for all the team members to meet privately outside the formal venue, at the earliest possible opportunity, to work out the next step. The fishbowl exercise, when the team meets to discuss an issue in the middle of the room during an enactment or discussion, may sometimes be used in European contexts but not in Africa.

'Cultural Script-writing'

Cultural script-writing is absolutely central to the preparation of the team. By cultural script-writing is meant linking the cultural scenes to the cultural themes. It means understanding the hidden meanings behind narratives or cultural scenes, and how they embody the different cultural themes that have been uncovered by the research and cultural analysis. Here culture-drama is quite different from psychodrama, where any kind of scripting is a way of judging and controlling the person in therapy. The person must always be allowed to tell his or her own story.

Culture is shared knowledge. This knowledge is encoded or culturally scripted but it is also implicit or hidden. The cultural group shares these hidden codes, patterns and pathways that mediate their reality, but they are not consciously aware of them. Yet it is essential for the facilitators to have some basic understanding of them. The best way for them to access this knowledge and the hidden cultural themes is through cultural analysis, which is a lengthy process and must be done long beforehand.

The cultural script, as we speak of it here, is not a text to follow in the enactment as in the script of a play. This is left completely to the creativity of those performing the enactment. But the facilitators, especially if they are not familiar with the cultures, need to be able to identify the cultural themes and to link them to real life cases and narratives beforehand. If the cultural scripts are written out at all, they are mere notes about these linkages, not step-by-step formulas. Even though the cultural scripts can be used as a back-up measure if things get slow, or to prime the pump in order to get discussion moving and new scenes created, the real importance of cultural scripts is that they keep the team focused on the main themes. Otherwise the facilitation is in danger of focusing on individuals instead of the group. The cultural script is the closest thing to a culture-drama workshop syllabus that is available.

Choosing the Participants

Just as the team must be well chosen, a great deal of care must be put into choosing the participants. In a peacebuilding workshop the participants should be equally distributed, half from each ethnic group. A good number to aim at is a total of 24 to 30 participants. This brings each group to between 12 and 15 participants, which is ideal for group cohesion and interaction. At Nsawam there were ten Konkombas and nine Dagombas. One Dagomba did not turn up. Because the participants grow together as a group, and it is the group that progresses through the stages rather than individuals, all the participants need to start together and finish together. After the workshop starts, no one should be allowed to leave or to enter the workshop. This extends to facilitators and observers, if there are any. Of course, this may be difficult to manage, especially if they are used to coming and going as they please. At Nsawam several of the Dagomba participants came late and two left early.

Plate 19. Group photo of participants

A Cross-section of the People

The participants should represent a cross-section of their own ethnic group as a whole. This may cause some problems where English is used as the enactment and discussion language but where most of the ethnic group's people do not speak English and where there are no facilities for simultaneous translation. In this case, having one or two non-English speaking participants is still possible if one of their own group can translate for them. Having enough women may also pose problems in Africa because of their lower rate of education. Still, every effort should be made to balance the group. Participants should include both the young and the old, and the full range of religions and social statuses should be represented. There may also be some regional considerations. As much as possible they should represent the entire geographical area covered by their ethnic group. Clan affiliation and dialectical differences should also be represented, although these are usually covered by the geographical area consideration.

The "Mid-level" Criterion

Apart from these basic group-distribution considerations, there is also the need to consider Lederach's "mid-level" criterion. All of the participants must be "mid-level" persons. These include the local sages and opinion leaders, local religious leaders, teachers, and other respected members of the community who are in a position to influence large numbers of those at the grass roots level of their communities as well as those in the highest positions of leadership and power.

PROXIMATE PREPARATION

Proximate preparation involves the choosing of the site for the workshop, setting the time frame and the objectives of the workshop, and the preparation of the participants and the props.

Choosing the Site

Choosing a site for the workshop is very important. The normal considerations of access and convenience, services and facilities, costing etc., aside, the one most important consideration for a peacebuilding workshop is the impression it will make

on the local conflicted community. In the case of the Nsawam workshop, for example, since it was the first time such a workshop was given and we did not want to run the risk of having to cope with negative rumours and speculation, we felt that it was better to have it in Southern Ghana, some 500 miles away from where the participants live.

The Time Frame

The time frame depends on the level of integration that is desired, the severity of conflictual themes, and the initial expectations of the participants. A good time frame for a culture-drama workshop is five to seven days. Because culture-drama is new to peacebuilding, it may take some time, probably a day or two, for the participants to wake up to what is happening. It will take even longer if many of the participants have already attended training workshops and have fixed expectations. This cannot be helped. Unlearning takes four times as long as learning. The unlearning factor needs to be taken very seriously and it will take time before people get to know what culture-drama is about.

Participants must be Well Informed

Participants need to be well informed about the nature of the workshop and they must agree to it beforehand. If they may expect a more structured program with a syllabus, they need to be informed that this will not be the case in this workshop. If they are not clear on this point, it may turn out to be an emotionally charged issue, which could jeopardize the whole workshop. Having said this, it should be pointed out that it is very difficult to describe what happens in culture-drama or to change peoples expectations of a workshop if they already have something in mind.

At Nsawam, the participants became uneasy and confused by the second day because of the amount of unlearning that had to be done. They had attended many previous workshops so, in spite of being told beforehand that there would be very little external structure to it, they were still expecting that it be run like a proper workshop, as they understood it, with structure and a well laid out program. In addition to this some wanted more free time to be able to come and go as they pleased. They were very disappointed when they were not able to miss sessions in order to go out with their friends. One or two even tried to re-negotiate their commitment to the workshop in view of their unfulfilled expectations.

Plate 20. Participants discussing during break

Setting Objectives

It is necessary to set objectives for the workshop and have an internal plan of action but at the same time facilitators need to be flexible enough to change this according to the needs of the participants. At Nsawam we kept our expectations open ended. We wished to introduce the participants to the new drama format and to guide two or three of the cultural themes as far along the path toward integration as possible. The objective was not so much to reach a complete integration or synthesis, as it was to instil a new vision for peace and some appreciation for the culture-drama method, and in some way to provide for the continuation of the process. As it turned out we were lucky to have achieved these goals because it took two and a half days, or half the workshop, just to get them to catch on to and accept what we were doing. If the same

group were to do another such workshop our objectives would be much higher. We could aim at completing the synthesis of one or two of the themes.

Plate 21. Facilitator in analysis, half-moon shaped seating

Break Time

Breaks for meals or snacks, as much as possible, should be scheduled at regular intervals. However, the schedule need not be followed absolutely. Sometimes it is better to stay in role until an integration has been achieved. After breaks, depending on the mood of the group, there may have to be new warm-ups. The breaks are extremely important for the bonding of facilitators and the group. They are also important for the facilitators to do some impromptu planning. This may lead to changing the focus of the next session. They are useful for the participants to enter into small group discussions with other participants to deepen their understanding of the scenes and enactments. The facilitators can also make use of the breaks to take participants aside to suggest to them possibilities of new scenes. The suggestions will follow the cultural scripts of the facilitators but will always be planted in something the participant did or said in a previous scene or discussion, which may not have been followed up but was very important for the themes.

Props

As in any drama, props are an essential part of setting the scene and creating the right atmosphere for the enactment. The atmosphere keeps the participants in role and it is through their roles that they arrive at cultural conversion.

Types of Props

Because props must be gathered or produced immediately beforehand, they fall under proximate preparation. Props can include any of the kinds of items used in theatre like painted backdrops, lighting, recorded sounds, costumes, etc., or real life props such as tables and chairs, and improvised props which means fabricating something that is called for on the spur of the moment. Theatres themselves are large props. The right space must be chosen for the workshop. It should be comfortable, but not too comfortable. It should not be confining. It should be light and airy, but adjustable with blinds or curtains. The seating can be arranged in the round or half moon shape depending on the types of scenes that are needed.

Plate 22. Market scene: note the use of props to convey the feeling of a market

Life Props

Props can also include objects from everyday life like tables and chairs, and other furnishings, food, drinks, drugs, weapons, tools, clothing, musical instruments, etc. They can include artefacts with deep cultural meaning such as chiefly regalia, a sceptre, a headdress, stools, carved masks, special cloth or clothing, hats, animal skins, shoes or boots. They can include religious artefacts such as traditional shrines, a statue of a saint, a Muslim *tesba*, or a Catholic rosary. They can include natural items such as plants, trees, flowers, rain, snow, wind, etc. Because they need to be gathered or produced well beforehand, the organiser or facilitator must already have a clear picture from the cultural scripts and themes of what is needed and how the props are to be used.

Plate 23. Earth shrine custodians pouring a libation at a shrine. Note the shrine itself and the spirit of the shrine covered with a bed sheet.

Improvised Props

The greatest requirement for obtaining props is a little creativity. Anything can be a prop with a little ingenuity and a lot of imagination. The most important props for the spontaneous nature of culture-drama are improvised items like a bead necklace serving as a rosary, a bench as a motorcycle, an upturned bench as a canoe, two toilet paper tubes or coke bottles as binoculars, a bottle cap becomes a monocle, a tee-shirt worn on the head becomes an Egyptian headdress and a bed-sheet serves as a toga etc. The quality of such improvised props obviously depends on the lively creativity and ingenuity of the facilitators.

DOING CULTURE-DRAMA IN THE WORKSHOP

Plate 24. Setting the desert island scene

The Nine Stages of the Culture-drama Workshop

Culture-drama in the workshop format is essentially a ritualising of the entire third stage in peacebuilding. As in any rite, there are stages or movements but they don't exactly follow the five theoretical stages presented above. The workshop format must be flexible enough to allow for personal and cultural differences and at the same time keep the principles of cultural synthesis in the foreground. The preliminaries are such an important part of the whole process that they need to be included in the method itself. Thus 'setting the scene' and 'warming up' need to be included as stages (1) and (2). The cyclic movement, the going back, the rehearsals and 'focused enactments' etc., also need to be worked into the overall format. Therefore, we have inserted stages (6) and (7). These shape the culture-drama workshop into a format having nine stages. These are: (1) setting the cultural scene, (2) 'warming up' (3) acting the scene, (4) reflection, (5) analysis, (6) 'focused enactments' (7) discussion and analysis of 'focused enactments' (8) cultural integration, and (9) cross-cultural synthesis.

1. Setting the Cultural Scene

Setting the scene and warming up are integral stages to the overall process. Scenes provide the cultural context for drawing out the illusive cultural themes. The scenes, in themselves, are not as important as the cultural themes, for in any given scene it is

Plate 25. Dagomba spokesperson introducing the chieftaincy scene

really the deeper themes that are being worked on. But without the scenes, the themes remain hidden. The scenes need to be taken from real life, and just as cultural themes are embedded in everyday life, they are also present inside the scenes. The more life-like the scenes, the more theme-filled they will be. Therefore, a lot of work needs to go into setting the scene properly.

Scenes are Elicited from Participants

Topics for scenes may be introduced in a very general way by the facilitators but the scenes themselves and the details need to be elicited from the participants. At Nsawam, for example, the participants were asked to break up into groups of three and tell their war stories to each other. Then each group selected one of the stories to tell to the larger group. Then the group as a whole selected one of the scenes for enactment. At the end of the workshop, participants broke up into their two ethnic groups to discuss the issues that they wished to enact in the final sessions. Interestingly, both groups came up with the same two issues: chieftaincy and the reintegration of Konkombas into the principal cities of the area: Yendi and Tamale. Then both of these were enacted.

Plate 26. Konkomba spokesperson introducing the re-integration scene

How to Use the 'Cultural Script'

Sometimes, if there is a lull in discussion, the facilitators may need to introduce a scene from the cultural script or from their general knowledge of the pathways, which has been prepared in advance. It should include the cultural themes, provided by the researchers, already matched up with a number of potential scenes. These may be introduced in question form or the seeds may be sown in discussion with some of the participants during break time. But the participants need to present the scene themselves. Often the participants bring up good scenes spontaneously but in fragments. During a break the facilitator can coach them on how best to introduce the scene to the group. The trick is to keep presentations short and enactment-friendly.

Discerning the Roles

After an appropriate story has been told or a case presented, it is the job of the facilitator to break it down into one or more scenes to be enacted. Then the parts or roles have to be discerned. The group does much of this work automatically as they discuss the case. Besides the human protagonists, the roles may include actors from the spirit world, such as ancestors, bush spirits, or tutelary spirits. At Nsawam, for example, the Earth was represented in the Earth priest scene. In the scene Earth continually voiced the moral concerns of the ancestors and the spirit world in general.

Plate 27. Earth priest scene

Roles can also include corporate entities like village A and village B, the government, another tribal group, or development donors like the World Bank, the European Union, or the Church. All the participants need to have roles and everyone must be involved in the enactment. Besides the main roles, there may be a kind of chorus as we find in Greek drama or bit parts like those standing around.

How to use Doubling

Besides having his or her own roles to play, anyone who gets moved by the spirit of the enactment may take up another role through the technique of doubling which has been described above. The doubler either adds something new in addition to the role as it has been played or changes the role by acting it out more fully and realistically. There is also the possibility of everyone suddenly realising during the enactment that another role is needed. The facilitator may then have to co-opt one of those playing bit parts into the new role.

Plate 28. Pouring libation to the Earth shrine

2. Warm-up

De-roling

The more realistic the roles, the more dramatic will be the results. To do culture-drama well, participants must be prepared to take on their new roles as completely as possible. First they need to be "warmed up" in order to "thaw out" their own frozen cultural roles. Various techniques can be used to "de-role". Those used in meditation are especially helpful, but any kind of useless, repetitive activity (e.g. tearing up paper into small pieces and picking them up one by one) is most helpful. This is to produce a "perceptual mode" or one in which participants are ready to perceive raw input data unfiltered by their own cultural lenses.

Activities such as acting out as animals, which were mentioned above, can also be very helpful. The facilitator can have everyone imagine himself or herself as a particular animal or an object. When the image has been established, the facilitator can ask the participants how it feels to be that animal or object, what the smells are like, what sounds they hear, what they want to do. He or she can then ask them to make the sounds appropriate to that animal or object and try to converse with the person next to them. Later he or she can ask what they communicated and heard.

Various introductions can also serve as "warm-ups". At Nsawam we used "art therapy" in the drawings on the bed sheets and self-presentation in a reversed role as warm-ups. All the participants were asked to introduce themselves to someone they didn't know and to tell a little about themselves to each other. Then they introduced themselves as their new friends using the information that was given and as closely as possible copying the mannerisms of their new friends.

Exit Learning

Besides the techniques borrowed from psychology, a number of techniques are borrowed from cross-cultural learning. The preparation is to help the participants to get out of their roles. It involves a cultural emptying, a process of leaving one's own culture. This is to untie the cultural ropes that bind us, to gain freedom and spontaneity, inspiration and creativity. This emptying, or "exit learning" is not easy. It is a learning process that involves a number of activities, which call attention to the cultural "roles" we play in everyday life. Once we have been made aware of them, we can leave them behind.

3. The Enactment

The Scene

After the participants have sufficiently exited their culture-bound roles and modes of thinking, they can begin the process of "entry learning". Here they "leave to learn". First they are introduced to a scene to be enacted. The roles are described in detail and discussed. Then they are helped to take on a role of the other culture mentally and physically. The "models" of the enactment are demonstrated by the other culture. The first enactment at Nsawam was an account of how a Dagomba heroically saved

the lives of a Konkomba family who were caught at the lorry park in Tamale. Each group started off by acting themselves or enacting their own cultural roles. This helped them to image a set of roles that were modelled by the other culture.

Entry Learning

They are then invited to take on the model, allowing the image to inform their limbs, mannerisms, speech, and behaviour. The facilitators may ask the group to close their eyes and try to imagine themselves in that role and in that scene wherever it is – the market, the stadium or the farm etc. They may ask, “How does it smell?” “What do you hear around you?” “What do you have in your hands, beside you, around you?”

They are then invited to talk or babble in what they imagine to be the language of this culture. They walk their walk and dance their dance. In all these activities the whole group needs to be involved. One may be selected for a given demonstration but all must participate. Slowly they start taking on the new culture, piece by piece, contextually, *in situ*, by following the role models. When they are sufficiently prepared they can set up the props and begin the enactment.

Use the Languages of the Participants

As the enactment continues, as the interaction becomes more fluid and engaging, and as the actors take on their new identities, the enactment begins to take on a life of its own. It follows the pathways implicit in both cultures. The role language should, as much as possible, be the actual language of the group being enacted. The same is true for the noises, actions and body language. In reverse enactments this may not always be possible, for example at Nsawam the Konkomba spoke Dagbani but the Dagomba could not speak Konkomba (*Likpakpaln*), so we ended up using Dagbani for both.

Plate 29. Actors involved in enactment using their own language

Local languages capture the content of the themes in a way that guides them to their resolution. Again we see the union of opposites and complementarities in action. At the Nsawam workshop, a Dagomba offered this proverb/riddle, which for him epitomized the critical nature of the problem of re-integrating the Konkomba into Yendi, “A cobra is in our granary! It is a critical problem that will not go away. It must be solved no matter what. If we don’t go after it we will starve. Do we go in after it (and get bitten) or do we set fire to the granary and smoke it out (and spoil the crop). The answer is to proceed softly, softly and to make it more attractive for it to leave the granary than to stay.

Plate 30. Participants discussing an enactment

Impromptu Scene-breaks

As the enactment of the scene continues there may be breaks in the action for further scene setting, adjustment, discussion, for the insertion of additional roles, or for explanations leading to the next scene. Often, while a scene is being portrayed, it becomes clear to the facilitator that new roles are needed or another scene needs to be played simultaneously at the other end of the room. There can be a short time out while the new scene is set up and new roles are assigned. If the group has difficulty accepting their culturally conditioned behaviour, especially when the scene clearly demonstrates one of the cultural themes, the facilitator may call for a break and then

set up a focused enactment. Afterwards the facilitator can ask the main protagonists how they feel, how they experience their antagonist, how they experience the people around them etc., in an effort to move them through their denial. Then they can continue with the enactment.

The enactment of scenes and focused enactments can be introduced any time they are needed. For example, during the reflection or analysis, a portion of the scene can be replayed, with the same or with different actors, in order to demonstrate a point, or to create new awareness or acceptance in the actors.

4. Reflection

When the scene has been completed, the participants are asked to take their seats and to remain quiet for a few moments to savour their experience in the role. Then the facilitator begins by asking the participants how they felt playing the role:

Plate 31. Facilitator with a diagram during the analysis

The reflection may continue in this line:

- How they experienced the whole scene, the interaction.
- How they felt in their own roles.
- How they felt in reverse roles.
- How they experienced the culture they played.
- How they experienced their own culture being played by others.
- How they felt doubling.
- How they felt being doubled.
- What they felt about themselves.
- How they changed or came to see something new.
- Whether or not they experienced any difficulty in the roles.
- Whether or not they would be able to create their own enactments.

Reflections need to be elicited from the participants and guided by the facilitators. The cultural themes should be accentuated whenever they arise in the discussion. The discussion is meant to help them to understand and internalise their experience. But although they can gain insight into the cultural interaction through discussion, it cannot lead them to acceptance. This can only come through further enactment.

5. Analysis

In the analysis the facilitators take on a more directive role. As they reflect back on the enactment and discussion, they may begin by having the participants ask themselves these questions:

- How do I (we) feel? We feel . . . (e.g. victimized, supported, confused).
- What do I (we) need? We need . . . (e.g. peace, to be strong, to be less aggressive).

- What do I (we) fear? We fear . . . (e.g. being more victimized, being weak, conflict).
- Never refer to us as . . . (e.g. victimized, loser, superior, aggressive).
- What/where I secretly want to be/go/do is . . . (e.g. superior, victim, supportive).

Moving deeper into the Analysis

The facilitator may initiate the analysis with information that has been lifted from the answers given by the participants to these questions. Wherever possible diagrams and other visual aids should be used to increase understanding. Initially the analysis aims at leading the group to understand the enactment and the issues arising from the discussions. The focus is on self-understanding, acceptance and integration of sub-identities. But as the scenes move ever deeper into the cultural themes, the analysis begins to focus more and more on group synthesis. The facilitator may then pose such questions as:

- Where is the rub, the friction between the opposing roles?
- Did you feel that you were compensating for the friction and balancing the opposing roles?
- How? What were the cultural dynamics involved?
- What are your stereotypes of the other culture?
- What is the reality?
- What cultural themes were expressed? (The facilitator may elicit the cultural themes, describing each in more detail as they arise in discussion.)
- How do these themes relate to your role?
- How do they relate to your own cultural identity?
- How did the themes play out in terms of the two roles?
- Is there a *right* or a *wrong* way to interact?

Plate 32. Facilitator and participant in a *focused enactment*

6. *Focused Enactments*

The Power of Complementarities

An important part of analysis is explaining in greater detail the cultural themes, which have just been discussed or enacted. Conflicting cultural pathways have within their very oppositions the power of complementarities, which they can use to achieve a balance. An aggressive cultural pathway needs to be balanced with a submissive one, for example, one that *hits* with one that *runs*. At Nsawam, the cultural pathways of the Dagomba and the Konkomba were both conflictive and complementary with regard to the four cultural themes discussed in detail above. Here we may recall from our earlier discussion in the Introduction that the basis for this is the idea of *polarities* within a larger unity.

In order to help individuals or the group as a whole work through recognition and acceptance, discussion or analysis can be stopped at any time and the participant(s) experiencing difficulties may be invited to re-enact roles of scenes that have already

been played or related scenes that arise from discussion. Acceptance is a difficult step and it may require several rehearsals or *focused enactments*. Sometimes it is also useful to show that different persons of the same culture may act out the roles quite differently. There may be wide variations in a given culture, all expressing the same cultural themes. But here we are, once again, reminded that the primary focus of culture-drama is the internal integration of the cultures and the external synthesis of the cultures. It is not about individuals.

Following the discussion, the facilitator leads the analysis. The same questions that are asked in step five may once again be asked. In addition to these, the following questions may be asked of the group:

Plate 33. Facilitator with participants during a break

- What new things did you learn from the *focused enactment*?
- In what way does it change your understanding of your culture?
- In what way does it change your understanding of the other culture?
- In what way does it change your understanding of the stereotypes, the cultural roles, the cultural dynamics, or the cultural themes?

Each cultural scene that is dramatized and worked on should be taken as far along the progression toward integration as possible. Cultural integration means bringing the culture into an internal harmony with itself, harmonizing the inner voices of the culture, the impulse to be aggressive with the value and ideal of accommodation, or the notion of a *big-man* as one to be served with the ideal of service for others. For example, in the Dagomba proverb: *“The chief is a rubbish heap,”* meaning everything bad and good goes to the chief, or the chief is completely at the service of the community. The ideal chief has nothing for himself. Yet, as everyone can plainly see, this is getting to be further and further from the actual reality.

Plate 34. Final synthesis drawing on the bed sheet

The facilitators help the participants to reduce the dissonance between cultural ideals and actual behaviour, and between the various *faces* and *voices* of the culture, by alternately leading them through focused enactments and discussion/analysis. They may pose some of these questions for discussion:

- Where are the various *faces* and *voices* beginning to blend internally?
- Where do they need work?
- How do they need work?
- What kinds of peacebuilding initiatives may be required to bring greater integration?
- What kinds of rehearsal are envisioned?
- What kinds of *focused enactments* are still needed?
- What is the *peace culture* vision for this [name it] cultural theme?
- How will you arrive at that vision (through enactment, in reality)?

9. Cross-cultural Synthesis

The cross-cultural synthesis aims at developing a shared culture of peace with regard to shared cultural themes. It aims to transform these from negative to positive synergies. Progress toward the shared integration or synthesis runs neck and neck with the cultural integration. There is no synthesis without integration. And there is no real internal integration without the external integration or synthesis with the other culture. This is because cultures need help, especially from their opposites. By the last day of the workshop some attempt should be made to link the two levels of integration. The facilitator may summarise the various cultural integrations that the two cultures have gone through in the foregoing days in an attempt to come up with an overall vision of the *‘peace culture’* which, in fact, is the cultural synthesis.

Many of the same questions can be asked as were asked at the level of integration:

- What kinds of peacebuilding initiatives may be required to address the negative synergies?
- What kinds of efforts need to be made to build consensus and unity?
- What is the overall *‘peace culture’* vision for these [name them] cultural themes?
- How will you arrive at that vision?
- Where are the various *‘faces’* and *‘voices’* beginning to blend internally?
- Where are they beginning to blend externally, between the two cultures?
- Where do they need work?
- How do they need work?
- What kinds of peacebuilding initiatives may be required to bring greater integration?
- What kinds of roles need to be practiced?
- What kinds of rehearsals are envisioned?

EVALUATION: HOW THE WORKSHOP CHANGED THE PARTICIPANTS

How did the participants evaluate the Nsawam workshop? How did the facilitators evaluate it? What new insights came out of it? In the next section we will answer these questions and compare the answers with our general and specific expectations. We have already mentioned three general aims in culture-drama workshops:

1. To expose the deeper systemic issues and cultural pathways that continually bring cultural groups into conflict,
2. To lead participants to recognition and acceptance of these and
3. To begin to integrate their pathways internally and externally, form new unities and build a *‘peace culture’*

At the theoretical level, as a process, culture-drama runs from exposure, through awareness-creation, recognition, acceptance, and coordination, to enactment for

integration, and enactment for synthesis. But in reality, workshops have a life of their own. Each workshop brings its own specific problems and issues, contexts and situations. At the Nsawam workshop, besides our concerns about the enactment process, we anticipated a number of special concerns and issues. It was the first time it was presented. We anticipated that the participants would have difficulties understanding it. We also expected that relational issues would arise between the two groups and the facilitators. With these in mind we voiced the following specific aims:

1. To introduce the participants to the enactment process (bearing in mind that it was entirely new to them).
2. To guide two or three of the culture themes as far along the path toward integration and synthesis as possible.
3. To instil a new vision for peace and a peace culture.
4. To cultivate an understanding and appreciation for the culture-drama method.
5. To provide for its continuation.

What actually happened at Nsawam fulfilled all of these expectations but also opened up others, which we could not have anticipated.

1. Introducing the New Enactment Process

At the beginning of the Workshop, participants expected something far different from what we were presenting. They had been told that we would focus on enactment but they had no way of knowing what this meant. All our efforts to explain and diagram the process fell on deaf ears. It just wasn't getting through. In Ghana we call this: *õBorõfo*, *Borõfoö* (lit. *õWhite man, White manö*). The problem was not to be solved by a better choice of words or clearer diagrams (which the facilitators who were less familiar with the local situation advised). The problem was the medium. We were using a low context language (European English) to describe a high context process. We needed to demonstrate it rather than talk about it. The more we got into enactment the more the participants came to understand what we were getting at.

In the beginning, the participants wanted our workshop to be just like all the other workshops they had been on. Some wanted to impress us with how much they knew. Others felt comfortable with what they already knew. But as the workshop progressed they came to see that the enactment process was very different from all the other workshops they had attended.

Gradually, as more and more got involved in the enactment process, they came to feel its power and they became more interested. It took more time than we had expected but eventually it started to make sense and they began to be more comfortable with it. Due to the difficulties in unlearning and the need to learn the process directly instead of talking about it, we were half way through the workshop before the breakthrough finally came. After the breakthrough the participants were more relaxed, and they were no longer concerned about the program and syllabus. They were able to enter into the process and we made rapid progress.

One of the Dagomba participants expressed his initial fears in this way: "At first we were afraid that talking about the fighting and acting out the roles would only open old wounds needlessly, so we were opposed to it. But the moment that we started to enact the roles, all our fears vanished. At first I was opposed to what the facilitators were trying to do. I thought that they were not organised and didn't know how to run a proper workshop. I didn't see that their focus was on action and relationships, rather than discussion. But now I see differently. Clearly, the way forward is to build relationships through enactment workshops like this one."

Another Dagomba said: "At first I wanted more structure. I also thought that the facilitators didn't know how to run a workshop. I didn't want to act. I am not an actor. The whole thing seemed amateurish. But when we started doing it, everything changed. I saw that the acting started to affect our relationships. This changed everything. I got to see it was all about acting and relationships, not discussing."

A Konkomba also confirmed this saying: "At first it was very difficult. I wanted a structure and a form to work within. When they said it was formless I couldn't understand how we could accomplish anything. Now I see. I have received so much from the workshop. We have all been able to express ourselves freely. Sometimes forms and structures hold us in and keep us from freely expressing ourselves. It is not that culture-drama has no structure. There is structure to it, but it is not restricting. We must have more of these workshops. Now we can go ahead and have them closer to home; in Tamale, for example."

Then a Dagomba offered his comment: "The big difference between this workshop and the others was the acting. The acting made things more open and clear."

Another Konkomba said: "At first it was dull. We were not finding our way. We didn't understand the method. As it became clearer, it became more interesting. Now we know what it is about and it is very interesting. Now our work is set out for us. This method is very different but I encourage this way of doing workshops. It is far better than what we did before with only discussion."

2. New Perceptions and Understandings

Initially both groups lacked awareness. They perceived each other in ways that they did not admit to, or were unable to articulate. But by the end of the workshop they had become aware of the short sighted and stereotypical understandings that they had of each other.

One Konkomba who had played the role of a Dagomba at the chief's court said: "I was very satisfied with the outcome of the workshop. I felt for the first time that the chiefly customs of the Dagombas are good. We Konkombas need to learn from them. I have now seen that they are not a block to our coming together." Another said: "I felt encouraged and assured by the warnings they gave to their rogues and ruffians who are trying to bring discord and division. I saw clearly that the Dagombas really do want us to live peacefully among them as we did before. When we enacted the reintegration scene in Yendi they really did give us their full support."

3. Recognising and Accepting Cultural Differences

Initially, neither of the groups was able to work together or to interact freely. They did not recognise the important role that cultural differences played in the matter and, therefore, they could not formulate a new way of blending the cultures positively and constructively. By the end of the workshop, they all mentioned that they now understood and were alive to new possibilities of working together.

When discussing what the enactments meant to him, a Konkomba said: 'At first I didn't see that there were great differences between us. The role-plays were very practical. I liked them from the beginning. They really helped me to see our cultural differences.' Then a Konkomba added: 'Things came out that we would never have discussed. They came out automatically and naturally without fear. We could use our own language and express ourselves freely.' Another Konkomba said: 'The enactments are better than discussion. In all the other workshops that we have had up until now, both in Kumasi and in other places, we have never gotten very far with regard to the problem of integration. But here we have actually worked it out. We have really accomplished something!' He went on to say: 'The integration of Tamale may be more difficult than Yendi, but now we see how even it may be possible. We already have a start in the integration of schools like St. Charles. We must continue with this.'

One Konkomba stressed the need to work together in spite of cultural differences. By way of illustration he told this story:

Two friends were travelling together. They became tired and sat under a tree. Then one looked up and saw a bird. So he climbed the tree, caught the bird and gave it to his co-traveller saying: 'Here is a nice bird. I must leave now but I will return soon. Won't you take care of it for me?' Immediately after he left, his friend let the bird go. When the man came back he met his companion without the bird. 'No matter,' he said as he looked around, 'here is another bird.' And he caught it and gave it to his companion saying, 'Won't you keep it a little while for me while I go and come?' He went away and came back to meet his companion again without the bird. Again he said 'no matter' and he looked around to find still another bird, which he caught. But this time before he gave it to his companion he thought to himself for a moment. Finally he handed the bird to his companion saying, 'here is another bird. I am going away now, but *won't you keep it for us?*' Then upon his return he found his friend waiting for him with the bird in hand.

He summarised that peacebuilding is a joint effort. Like the bird in the story it must be jointly 'owned' by both parties if it is to be a success. 'Culture-drama has helped us to share the process and take ownership of it together.'

4. Overcoming Cultural Miscommunication

Initially the two groups were unaware of the cross-cultural miscommunication that existed between them. Even the suggestion, at the beginning of the workshop, that there was miscommunication, was rejected. Without culture-drama, it is difficult to

recognise miscommunication. The two groups were afraid even to talk about it, let alone to act on it. At the beginning when we suggested that they discuss their war experiences and act them out, there was enormous resistance to the idea. But when the enactment started, all resistance vanished.

They also discovered that miscommunication at this deeper level cannot be clarified through discussion – only enactment works. One Konkomba said: ‘In other workshops if we could not discuss an issue there was no possibility of ever dealing with it. But with culture-drama we were able to get directly to the issues through enactment. The enactments went further and were much more expressive than discussion.’ By the end of the workshop, both groups recognised many areas of cross-cultural miscommunication and they were alerted to the possibility of there being many more that they were not aware of. Indeed, we had only touched the surface. Culture-drama enactments clarified them, made it all right to admit them, and finally enabled us to begin dealing with them.

In cross-cultural contexts, miscommunication is bound to happen. Even the facilitators ran into miscommunication issues both among themselves and with the participants. When they come up it is important that they are recognised and dealt with. For example, one Dagomba said: ‘Our facilitators were okay except that the Western women facilitators should be more in touch with our way of doing things here in Africa. Here women must respect the men. The women facilitators should learn to –take it easy– on the men.’ To this Shu replied, ‘and you must realise that I am Chinese, not Western.’

The observer for CRS also had an important contribution here: ‘Playing the enactments enabled the issues to come out naturally in a way that was not threatening. When the Konkombas were acting the role of Dagomba chiefs, it was as if it were a plea for help. It urged the Dagombas to support them and teach them. In this way, some of the problems that we deal with in ordinary workshops are done away with entirely. The solutions are already there in the enactments.’

5. Overcoming Cultural Issues

In the beginning, it was not fully appreciated how important it is to recognise the cultural differences and to begin to bridge the gap, resolve the differences, and come to a synthesis. The first drawings on the desert island bed sheet were conspicuously –silent– on anything to do with cultural differences. But not talking about them makes it even harder to begin to work through them. The group was not aware that cultural integration and synthesis are even necessary; let alone how to begin doing it. By the end of the workshop all agreed, however, that the cultural pathways were indeed conflictual tracks. They also experienced the fact that they need each other to synthesize these pathways.

The Konkomba who played the Ya Na in an enactment said: ‘At first I was tense because when I suggested to my elders that I wanted the Konkombas to come back and live in Yendi, they didn’t agree with me. But then the –chief of the warriors– who was played by a real Dagomba, got behind me and said that this was also what he wanted. I was greatly relieved. This encouraged me to give the order that this is what

would be done. Then I was happy because I saw that they all began to support it. This let me see that the Dagomba system can work for us. It is not against us.ö

It was also important for each side to confirm the other. One Dagomba said: öThe Konkomba who acted the role of the Ya Na was very good. It was very similar to what the real Ya Na would have done, trying to find the best way out of the problem. He listened to his elders but finally he had to make the decision. He did well.ö

The Konkombas also praised the Dagombas in their roles: öThe Saboba chief (a Konkomba chief played by a Dagomba) did well to say that he would control the Konkomba rascals and trouble makers. He played his role well. He has given us a way through the problem.ö

Cultural issues on the level of domestic life also entered in. One Dagomba said: öIt has been said very often that it is important for us to begin to intermarry again. But there are cultural problems here. This workshop has helped me to go deeper into these problems. For example, the Konkombas say we Dagombas refuse to send our daughters to them to marry and yet we Dagombas marry their daughters. But we cannot force our daughters to marry someone they don't want. We Dagombas believe in freedom and equality in our marriages. You can't have a wife who is your 'slave'. Another problem is that Konkombas must exchange things including gifts and work. The groom must work on the farm of his in-laws for many years. This is difficult for us Dagombas. We cannot do this. We give our daughters away freely and we also expect to receive them freely. The Konkombas accuse us of stealing them but this is not stealing. Another problem is the Konkombas want their girls to become pregnant before marrying. This is abhorrent to us. It is not just a matter of intermarriage. We must also begin to resolve our cultural differences and the structures beneath them.ö

Cultural issues in the area of religious life also entered in. A Konkomba woman responded to the Dagomba above saying: öIt may be that Dagombas don't force their daughters to marry, but Muslims often force their daughters to marry only other Muslims. This makes it very difficult for Konkomba men, who are mainly Christian or traditionalist, to marry Dagomba women.ö

6. Overcoming the Fear of Failure in Negotiation

In the beginning, both groups were quite fearful about the possibilities of the Konkombas and Dagombas ever resolving their deep differences. This is a terrible burden to carry. It means that we are still very much in a öwar systemö and nowhere near the ideal öpeace systemö. Neither group really believed that the other group would ever listen to them and hear their deepest yearnings. Even the NPI, the WANEP, the Christian Council of Ghana, and other groups that have been very active, with all their successes behind them, have not given the average Konkomba or the average Dagomba any real hope that the conflict will ever end.

There were strong reservations in each group about 'negotiation' as an effective method in peacebuilding because even the most dialogical of discussions do not get to the very heart of the matter. At first everyone was afraid that discussion would only öopen old woundsö. öWhat do we need that for?'ö they said. Each group felt in their

heart of hearts that the other group will never really understand. At this most fundamental level of hope, culture-drama was a great enabler. What culture-drama did was to bring out the hope-filled vision that synthesis is possible, and that a real living peace culture is possible. It gave them hope for peace and it clarified how this would come about. This would never come about only through discussion. It was culture-drama that made it possible for them to break through the fear barrier.

Enactment makes things real. After the enactment of the Ya Na inviting the Konkombas back to Yendi, one of the Konkombas said: "We Konkombas were very worried about the outcome of the scene, but when the Ya Na (played by a Konkomba) said we could come back we were very happy. We knew that this could really happen because all the real Dagombas in the scene also supported it and found it quite natural."

A Dagomba said: "I learned from this workshop that we need to allow others like the Konkombas to express themselves. In the enactments we were all able to express ourselves without it being threatening like it is in other kinds of workshops that focus on negotiation."

One of the big problems for the Konkomba has been their distrust of the Regional House of Chiefs. This is the highest level of traditional authority in the Northern Region. The petitions of the minorities for their own chiefs have been repeatedly denied by this traditional body so they are afraid it. To the Konkomba and other non-chiefly groups the House of Chiefs has become like a barrier that can never be surmounted. This was openly addressed and indirectly dealt with in the chiefs court scenes especially in the integration scenes. In one scene, the Ya Na decided to invite the Konkomba back to Yendi without consulting the House of Chiefs. In this way he pre-empted their possible veto and made it very difficult for them to disagree. As one Dagomba said: "This is a real start. The House of Chiefs would not go against the Ya Na because they are all friends and they have to work together." In the next scene they actually began to act out how this integration might happen.

7. Overcoming the Blocks to Peacebuilding

In the beginning the participants were, for the most part, quite oblivious of the miscommunication that was occurring. As the workshop progressed and as the peace vision became clearer, the participants started to see some of the misguided efforts, and even negative actions and activities which block peace. They started to see more clearly some of the formidable blocks to unity, and the things that prevent the peace system or peace culture whether these were initiated by themselves or by others. Having a clear vision of the peace process and the peace culture at the end of the line, not only brings renewed conviction and hope, it also affords a clear picture of what is not needed, and it inspires strong convictions about removing all the unnecessary and divisive blocks. It addresses the considerable problem posed by those who purposely block the process and those who profit from the war system.

Here we need to rely on persons, not offices. Government officials and bureaucrats are sometimes part of the problem instead of the solution. They may have other agendas that may not always be favourable to genuine peacebuilding. In our

experience setting up the workshop, some officials were cooperative and showed a genuine interest while others did not. Some even tried to block the workshop.

One of the Konkombas spoke of potential blocks at the government level: "The government brought us together for the 'official reconciliation' at Yendi but I didn't feel reconciled. I felt like we were still at war and we were only forced to make a show of being reconciled. It is true that now it is calm, and nobody wants to go to war again, but we are not reconciled because we still haven't dealt with the deeper issues and structures. We also need healing. This takes time, even generations. The government does not seem to be concerned about this. But we must be concerned."

Another mentioned: "It is the youth on both sides who are causing the troubles, especially those who drink and smoke 'weed' [marijuana]. The key to the problem is managing our youth. We must control them. But this is not easy." Yet another said: "It is true, we must get them involved. But we can't choose just anyone for this. It must be someone they respect. Someone they will listen to."

A Konkomba made this important distinction: "It is okay to focus on the rascals but the princes are the ones who are really the power behind the scenes. They and the warlords on both sides make the decisions. The rascals only carry out their orders." Another Konkomba carried the distinction further saying: "We must distinguish between the 'youth' as a whole and those who are causing the trouble. The troublemakers are the crooks and hawks, not all the youth or elites."

It became clear that the "rascals" were not the only blocks to progress. One Dagomba said: "What we did in the Kumasi meetings was good. But we have learned here that peacebuilding is not about meetings and discussions. It is people coming together to listen to each other with all our senses open. We have done this here at this workshop and we have come to a greater unity. But what we have experienced here needs to be understood by our leaders, especially the 'princes' and royals. They too need to have a workshop like this. This should be our next target group." Another Dagomba said: "We can start by organising the princes. They won't be as easy as this group was." The CRS observer also opted for this saying: "What we have learned here will lead to the next step. Clearly the next step is to assemble the princes and have another workshop with them."

8. More Culture-drama Workshops

As the workshop progressed, the participants came to see that the enactment format is different from other workshops they have attended. It is as intimate and versatile as a glove. It fits any situation and group. They came to see that if it worked for this group it could work for other groups that may need it more than they do, or groups with vested interests that in some way may be blocking the peace process.

After the enactment of the 'integration' one of the Dagombas said: "We have experienced something very special here. We are now convinced that the Dagombas and Konkombas will eventually come together but we can still see many blocks. The rascals and some of the politicians will never agree to it. They are the real problems."

How do we convince them? Is it possible for them to experience this sort of enactment workshop as well?

Another Dagomba said: 'If we are to be successful organising the rascals we need someone whom they respect, someone from their own group. If we can get some of their leaders together on a culture-drama workshop it would go very far in achieving our aims.'

The CRS observer said: 'We have made the wrong decisions before. In the Bawku conflict we sent old men to talk to the youth so it failed. We wanted to establish trust so we sent elders but this didn't work. We need to train the youth using this kind of workshop so that they can keep the other youth informed and build up confidence.' A Konkomba carried this further saying: 'Can we not have a workshop for a group of these youth?'

9. Where to Go from Here

In the beginning, the participants didn't think about what they would learn and how they would bring it back home with them. By the end of the workshop, it was appreciated that the learning process was holistic and organic. It could grow like yeast in the community through their discussions and in the sharing of their new hope. But there was also the realisation that, although they can talk about their own experiences, they can do very little to reproduce the enactments back home. More culture-dramas are needed. More mid-level participants must be brought together to enact their pathways, their differences and similarities, just as they did. They can be a part of it, they can promote it, but they realised that if it is to continue there must be professional involvement. More facilitators must be trained and more workshops must be organised.

The observer from CRS commented: 'We have a good relationship among ourselves now. It was established especially in the enactment of the "integration". But how do we extend our experience of this to the larger community? How can we make the integration actually happen? We are leaving here tomorrow. How can we help others to have the same experience we have had?'

A Dagomba said: 'We have made great progress in this workshop. We have said and experienced things that have never before been said or experienced. We must now look for ways to bring these things back to our communities. We must put them into practice in our everyday lives.' One of the Konkombas said: 'Whatever we do we must do it together. The success of this workshop is in the life of this group.'

The CRS observer said: 'It is clear from this workshop that we need outsider professionals to help us through the process and to enable us to see ourselves more clearly. Would the facilitators be willing and able to do a series of training workshops here?' The facilitators responded with some possibilities for such workshops. These are summarised in Part V below.

10. Summary

In summary, the participants agreed on the following points concerning the importance of culture-drama:

- On the power and usefulness of culture-drama as an enactment genre.
- On its importance for peacebuilding, especially at the systemic level.
- On the way it can break down the barrier of fear.
- That it goes far beyond negotiation, discussion and even dialogue.
- On the way that it cuts through miscommunication by enactment.

They agreed on the following points concerning the effect that culture-drama had on them and on peacebuilding:

- On the way it has brought the group together.
- That it has brought the group further along in the peacebuilding process than other kinds of workshops.
- On the way it can lead the group to see their own stereotypes and those of others.
- On the way that it helped the group to overcome these stereotypes.
- On the way that it helped the group to recognise cross-cultural miscommunication.
- That it has brought the group new energy and a vision for the future.
- That it has helped the group to discover that real progress is always in deepening relationships through action, not in negotiation or establishing committees as we find in other workshops.
- That it has brought the group's cultural pathways together in a peace culture.

They agreed that the following points should be pursued and followed up:

- That this is only a beginning and more such workshops are needed.
- That culture-drama workshops become an integral part of the peacebuilding processes now in place.
- That more facilitators need to be trained in this new method.
- That future workshops should be adapted to reach other more specific target groups.
- That the participants should return to their communities and promote understanding of culture-drama and its effectiveness.
- That the facilitators should try to promote the new method of culture-drama at the national and international levels among development organisations, NGOs, and organisations involved in peacebuilding.

PART V: HOW TO TRAIN FACILITATORS

What is Needed?

Since culture-drama is only getting started, it is virtually unknown. As its merits come to be better understood and valued, and as the genre itself becomes better known and accepted, both in the peacebuilding community and for other purposes, such as for developing cultural strategies to deal with HIV/AIDS, to assist women in development, or for environmental issues, more workshops will be needed and it will be necessary to train more facilitators. The important questions here are:

- What kind of training is needed?
- How can they be trained?
- To what extent must trainees already have it in their blood?

Professional Knowledge

Ideally, the facilitator team should include persons who have knowledge and skills derived from the sub-disciplines of culture-drama like anthropology, psychodrama or socio-drama. But here we must distinguish between a professional research body or team who do the preliminary work of cultural and social analysis and the workshop facilitator team. There will always be the need for professional anthropologists and other social scientists to conduct the research and produce the literature on the conflicting pathways. But they are not necessarily the best facilitators in the culture-drama workshops. Similarly, not all psycho-dramatists are able to make good culture-drama facilitators for they may not be able to tune in to the cultural dimensions. They may also have the tendency to focus too much on the individual problems of the participants. In the same way, socio-dramatists may be able to connect up the various interdependencies in a given society but they may not be able to build the model in the culture's own terms, and they may not be able to make the synthesis between the two conflicting cultures.

Therefore, although some professional knowledge and skills in these areas are required of all culture-drama facilitators, it is not necessary for them to be professional anthropologists or psycho-dramatists. Rather, what is indispensable are local language skills and a number of core qualities.

Local Culture and Language Skills

A major requirement for any team of culture-drama facilitators is that one of the team must know (and preferably be a native speaker of) the language(s) and culture(s) that are the medium for a given workshop. Culture-drama enactments, to be most effective, need to be done in the vernacular. The facilitator's knowledge of the local languages and cultures will help the team to understand what is happening in the enactments, it will alert the team to the presence of cultural themes when they arise from enactments and it will help the team to distinguish clearly between cultural issues and those of individuals. One of the overall objectives in training is therefore to have represented among the trainees as wide a range of the local languages as possible. Getting a group of trainees together with such a wide range of local language skills could pose some problems in countries where there are many native languages (e.g., Ghana 60, Nigeria 300). But at least we can say that bi-lingual, and if possible tri-lingual, candidates are clearly preferred and, in general, greater attention needs to be paid to the languages of the candidates who are proposed for training.

Core Qualities

The core qualities are creativity, spontaneity and flexibility. Good facilitators must have these qualities in abundance. Professional peacebuilders and other development professionals who have these qualities will probably make good facilitators. But if they do not have these qualities, they probably will not. And no amount of professional knowledge and skill in their disciplines will compensate for this lack. Here selectivity is more important than training. Training can improve these characteristics but they must already be there as part of the personality and learned portfolio of the facilitator.

These qualities are illusive and must be tested in action. The training itself is action based. It is not a matter of learning a list of facts or a set of new techniques and procedures. Procedures are important but they are best learned through practice in cross-cultural contexts. The most important parts of the training, therefore, are practice and supervision. The skills are appropriated under supervision in highly contextual language- and culture-learning exercises, or in actual culture-drama workshop sessions. Candidates should be tested on whether or not they demonstrate these core qualities by their performances in these sessions.

Culture-drama Training

The Three Key Elements

Culture-drama combines elements from psychodrama and cultural analysis. Its training regimen therefore incorporates some techniques and methods from each. But culture-drama combines these sub-disciplines into a new format, so it is not enough to learn the techniques and methods of each discipline independently. They must also be learned as they are used in the culture-drama enactments. In all of these, experiential learning is emphasized. Here are the keys to culture-drama training:

- It is more experiential than theoretical
- It involves the learning of techniques and skills used in all three disciplines
- It combines these and uses them in a new way focusing on cross-cultural dynamics

Action, Reflection, Analysis

Training for culture-drama, like culture-drama workshops themselves, must involve action, reflection and analysis. All of these steps emphasize experiential learning. They take place in dramatic enactment, in group discussions and in analytic sessions in which discussion is directed by the facilitators.

Techniques Borrowed from Psychodrama

The techniques borrowed from psychodrama are:

1. The techniques and methods used in preparation such as: choosing the props, the venue, planning the workshop, team building, and choosing the participants.

2. The warm up techniques such as reverse role introductions, modelling straightforward role enactments, art therapy such as drawing on the desert island
3. Those techniques used in the enactment such as scene-setting techniques, reverse enactment, mirroring and doubling.
4. Those used in discussion and analysis.

Training for Psychodrama

Training for psychodrama primarily focuses on developing the core qualities and the internal dispositions in the candidates. It aims at personal maturity and growth. The first step is learning to be free. It involves the preparation of the cultural ego. Training helps the candidate to seek the answer to the question, who am I? The second step is in learning how to be more creative and spontaneous. The third step is learning to be more open and flexible. The fourth step is action that combines all of the above. All of these steps emphasize experiential learning through enactment. The enactment itself is, therefore, the principal vehicle for training.

Techniques Borrowed from Culture-learning

The techniques and methods borrowed from culture-learning are all those involved in cross-cultural learning and cultural analysis. Participant observation and cultural analysis techniques and methods are especially important. These include:

1. Observational methods,
2. Information gathering techniques,
3. Analytic methods including structural analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis, and
4. Arriving at cultural themes.

The Process of Culture-learning

Training for culture-learning is also highly experiential. It involves three stages: Exit learning, entry learning, and experiencing a cross-cultural conversion.

Exit learning or learning to leave is a process of divestiture. It involves identifying and parting from one's cultural pathways. This process is experiential and it is a comparative exercise. It can only be done in cultural contexts. It requires another culture to bounce up against and to compare with one's own culture. It is a gradual process. It doesn't happen all at once but gradually, in stages, like peeling off the layers of an onion. The deeper one goes in the comparison with the other culture the more one is able to peel away the covers of one's own culture. It is a cyclic process. It involves action, reflection and analysis in a cyclic progression, with one step enlightening and preparing the way for the next. It is a learning process. A person can only leave his or her first culture to learn another culture to the extent that he or she has learned how to leave his or her own culture. The learning involves a recognition and acceptance of one's own culture and recognition and acceptance of the other culture.

The second stage is entry learning or leaving to learn. It is a process of investiture. It involves the gradual acquisition of the roles and behaviour of the other culture, first learning about them, then experiencing them, and finally enacting them, taking them on, identifying with them. It is a gradual process like taking on (growing) new onion

layers. But taking on a new culture and identity CAN ONLY BE DONE BY LEAVING one's own culture bit-by-bit, piece-by-piece. Here there is a give and take that requires great flexibility and openness. One can only enter the new to the extent that one takes off the old. The second stage is, therefore, intimately linked to the first. In fact, the processes in both are going on at the same time. Referring to them as 'stages' is simply a matter of emphasis. 'Learning to leave' involves recognising and accepting one's culture but 'leaving to learn' involves a leaving, a divesting oneself of one's cumulative cultural identity and an entering into the new identity. It means leaving behind the values, attitudes, perspectives, sounds, sights, behaviour that make up one's culture and define one's identity. This can only be fully realised in the action, the enactment of the other culture. It is the facilitator's task to lead them through this.

The third stage is 'cross-cultural conversion'. When the other culture is taken on in a series of enactments, it gradually ceases to be so strange or foreign. It takes on greater familiarity with each new enactment, and eventually one catches a glimpse of the inner ontological reality of the other culture, its good sense, its 'truth' and holistic unity. Meaning breaks through our ethnocentrism and gradually it permeates all the activities and behaviour, filling them with value and meaning. Of course, in a culture-drama workshop the participants don't actually learn or acquire the language and culture of their protagonists. But for the culture-drama to 'work' they must experience some of that integrity of the other culture, some of its deep symbolic sense and meaning. They must experience some of the insider's stance.

'Cross-cultural conversion' is a process of discovery requiring enactment, reflection and analysis. For culture-drama to bring about change, and for the facilitator to make use of the process, it is not enough simply to experience it. It must be reflected upon and understood. It needs to be apprehended in a reflective way. 'Conversion' is experienced in the enactment, but it must be reflected on and fully articulated in the analysis. If the facilitator is to be a guide for others he or she must have already made the journey. This is the heart of training. A good training program helps the candidate to make this journey of discovery as many times as possible, and in as many different contexts and cultures as possible so that he or she may facilitate that process for others.

Culture-drama compresses and speeds up the culture-learning process for culturally therapeutic purposes. In culture-drama the participants are led through the process of learning to leave their cultural perspectives and values. They are led to recognise their perspectives and their value-behavioural complexes primarily in relation to those of the protagonist culture. This is done through a series of enactments followed by reflection and directed analysis. The analysis needs to be directed in order to deepen the cycle, to get deeper into the onion, as it were. But it can only be 'directed' to the extent that the facilitators have been there before, to the extent that they are competent cultural analysts, and to the extent that they have done the basic 'script-writing' with regard to the two cultures involved in the workshop.

Putting the Two Together

Culture-drama combines the techniques of psychodrama and cross-cultural learning. But the objectives come from 'cross-cultural learning'. The core qualities that are the focus of psychodrama are also present in culture-learning, but culture needs to be

accented rather than the individual personality. Creativity, spontaneity and flexibility are as important for the culture-drama facilitator as they are for the psycho-dramatist, but the ways they are used are different. These core qualities are needed at each of the stages in cross-cultural learning— learning to leave, leaving to learn and in taking on the insider's perspective.

The first aim of the psycho-dramatist is to 'know thyself'. For the culture-drama facilitator this becomes 'know your own culture'. The kinds of questions that elicit the answer to this are all culturally comparative. The freeing of the self from the bindings of one's own culture, or 'learning to leave' is part of the process of cross-cultural learning. The objective of this first step in culture-drama training is not personal integration and maturity, as it is with psychodrama, but cultural integration. It is not to shed one's own personal baggage, but to shed one's cultural baggage, the cultural neuroses that produce the negative synergies with other cultures.

Learning to be more creative and spontaneous promotes personal freedom. It is the culture-learning equivalent of 'learning to leave'. It involves leaving one's first culture (in a reflective way), leaving one's place, one's roles, and one's identity. It involves recognising, accepting and actively shedding one's own cultural 'baggage'—issues and 'garbage', one's cultural neuroses, and cultural problems.

Learning to be flexible and open are fundamental dispositions in 'leaving' one's own culture and 'entering' another. They require a childlike disposition, a child's wonder. 'Leaving to learn' requires a going out, a movement, an action, a departure from the 'cultural self'. But it also involves an actual step into something new. This is risky. It involves a leap of faith— that there is something of great value to be gained by it. The culture-learning equivalent of flexibility and openness is a fundamental 'cross-cultural humility' and an attitude of wonder toward the other culture, based on the hope that neither culture is fulfilled without the other.

Organising Training Sessions

A Suggested Training Program

Training good culture-drama facilitators is not easy. At present, there is no formal set of courses or academic/applied program that one might follow. It is a new interdisciplinary enactment genre. Since it involves the combination of two distinct disciplines, the training must incorporate some of the technical training methods of each. Since the training methods of each involve more participatory and experiential learning than academic learning, the training of culture-drama facilitators needs to be highly experiential.

The cross-cultural learning input consisting of the principles and practice of cross-cultural communication (two weeks) and cultural analysis (four weeks) can be compressed into 300 hours of training over six weeks: one two-week session (10 hours a day for 10 days) and one four-week session (10 hours a day for 20 days).

The psychodrama techniques and methods as they apply to culture-drama can be learned in 300 hours of training over six weeks: three two-week sessions of 100 hours each (10 hours a day for 10 days).

Together the two training modules make up 600 hours of training, which can be done in 12 weeks as follows:

Culture training (300 hours)

1 two-week "Cross-Cultural Communication" session (e.g., January & July)

1 four-week "Cultural Analysis" session (e.g., February & August)

Psychodrama training (300 hours)

1st two-week session (e.g., March & September)

2nd two-week session (e.g., April & October)

3rd two-week session (e.g., May & November)

The two components could be spread over six months so that two separate training programs could be run in one year. Both training components must be "residential" and could be done as complete programs at TICCS. The culture training should be taken first in order to establish the basic cultural processes involved. This will be necessary to counteract the individual bias of psychodrama techniques learned in the second half of the training program.

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